Sergio Martinez • Pascal-Hopkins II Preview • Miguel Cotto

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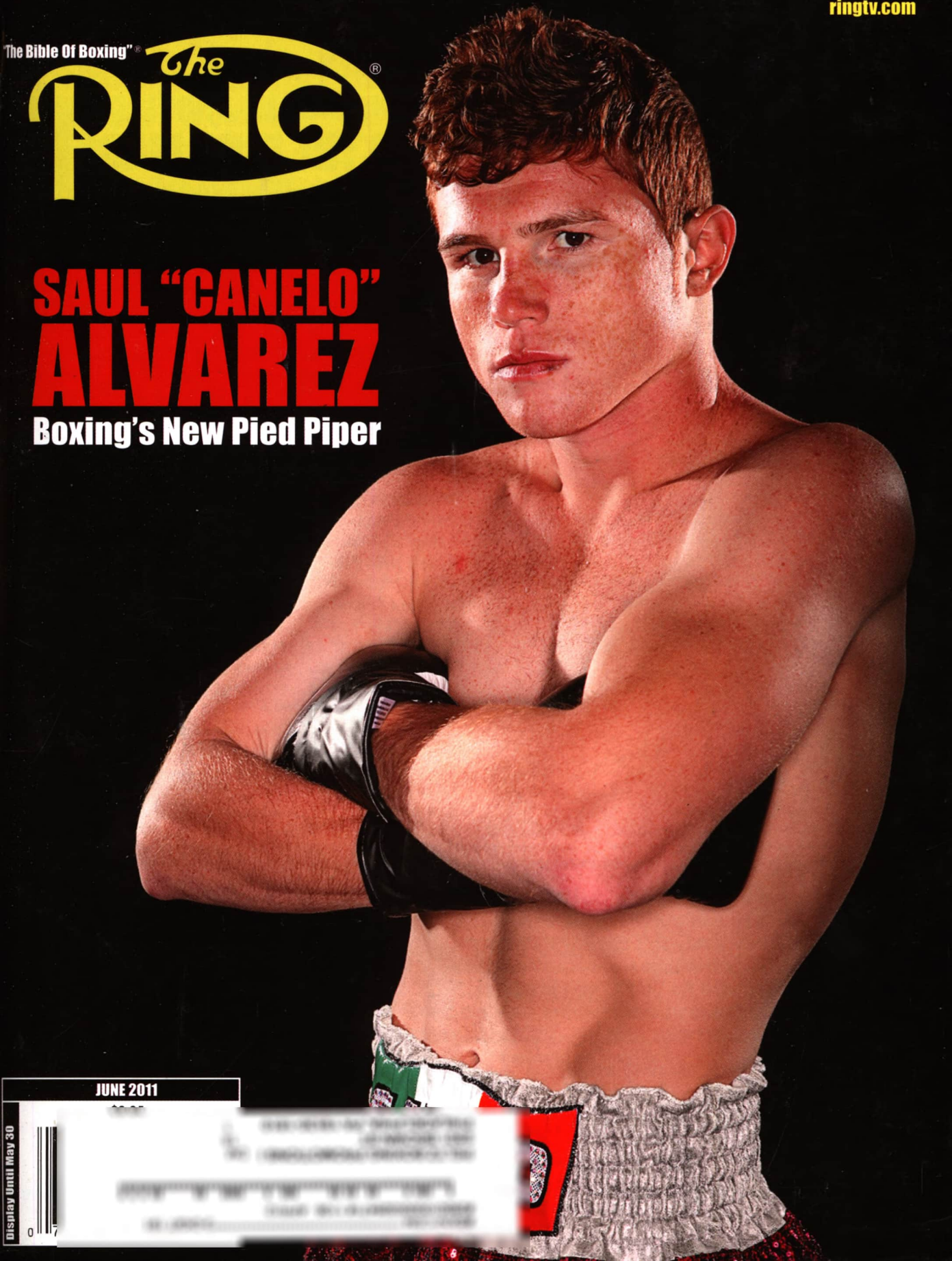

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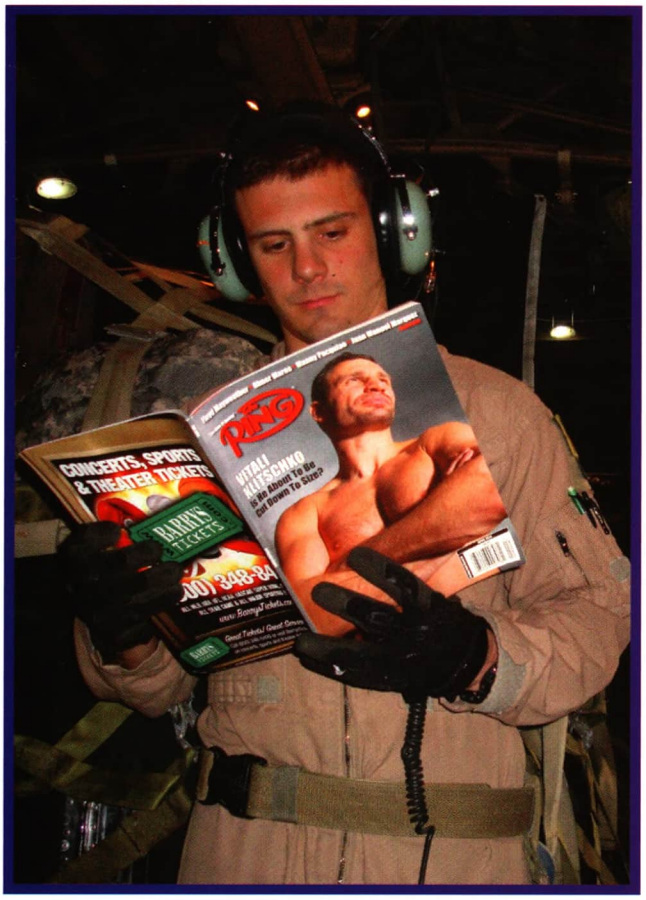

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All Villains Are Not Created Equal

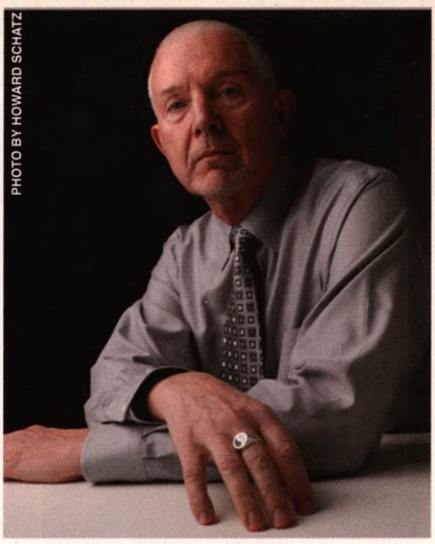
PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHATZ

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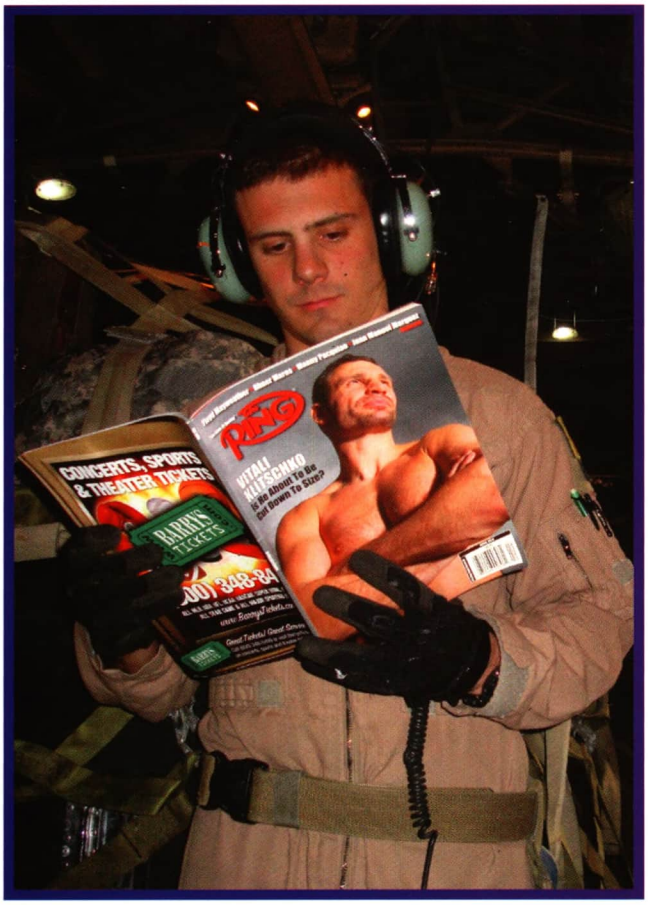

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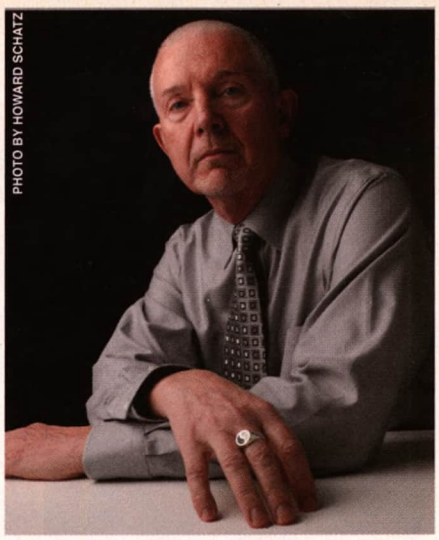
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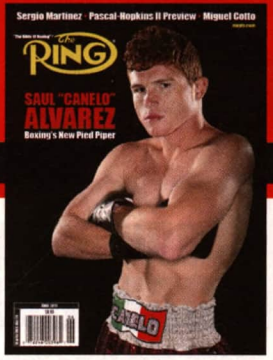

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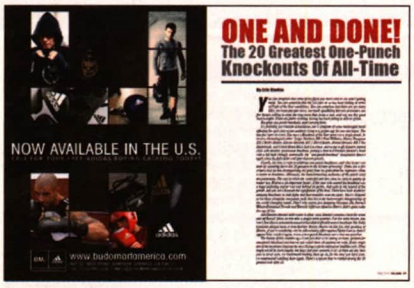

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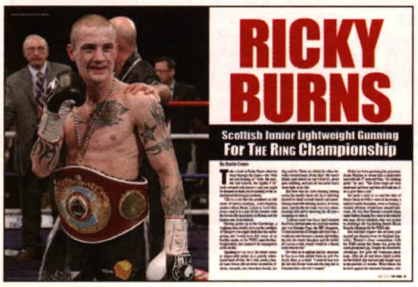

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WANT TO KNOW WHERE THE "CANELO" COMES FROM IN SAUL ALVAREZ?
Find out on Page 42

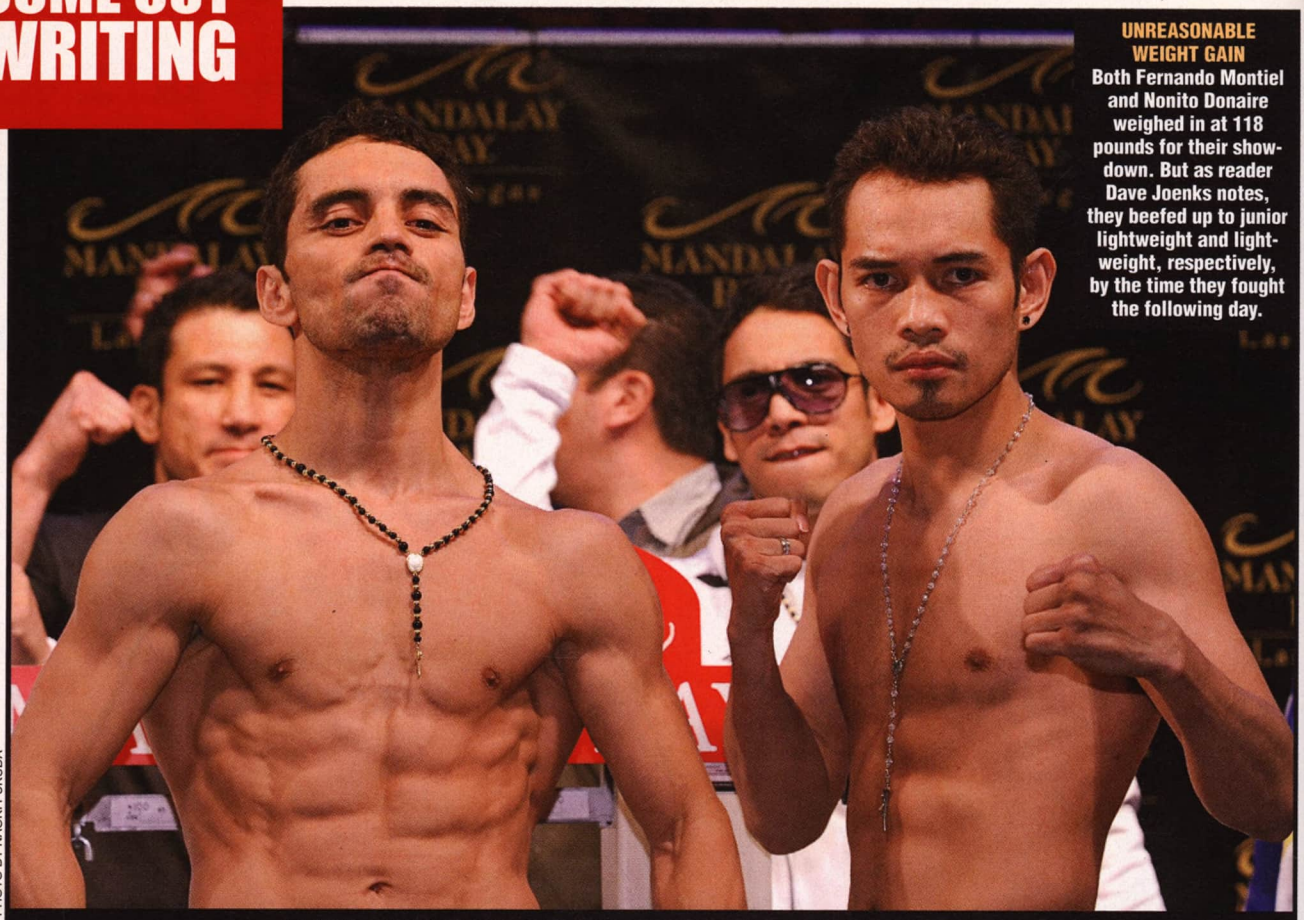
PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

OPENING SHOT

NEW RECRUIT

This atmospheric shot shows Oscar De La Hoya sitting aboard a C-130 military cargo plane in Baghdad, waiting to fly to Kuwait during a USO tour of the Middle East. "It's something that I've wanted to do for a long time," said De La Hoya. "It was long overdue, and I'm sure glad I did it."

PHOTO BY ROBERT GASPARRI/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS



UNREASONABLE WEIGHT GAIN
Both Fernando Montiel and Nonito Donaire weighed in at 118 pounds for their showdown. But as reader Dave Joenks notes, they beefed up to junior lightweight and lightweight, respectively, by the time they fought the following day.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Weighty Issue

I recently watched the Nonito Donaire-Fernando Montiel *bantamweight* title fight. I have an issue with Montiel weighing 128 pounds on fight night, but that was trumped when Donaire walked into the ring at a reported 134! I have no problem with a small weight gain after weighing in, but 12 percent! Arturo Gatti-Joey Gamache, anyone?

Make fighters weigh in the morning of the fight. If they can't make weight, they have *no* discipline and no business fighting at that weight anyhow.

DAVE JOENKS
Santa Clara, CA

Tortured Logic

A common theme in movies is to show how one small change in our lives can set in motion a completely different chain of events that change lives forever. This is what happened to Sergio Martinez. Kelly Pavlik was never supposed to fight Martinez! He was supposed to fight Paul Williams. However, a staph infection in Pavlik's hand caused a postponement and then another. Finally, Williams moved on, which was unfortunate for Pavlik because Williams is a soft-punching plodder that Pavlik usually feasts on. Martinez then fills in for Pavlik, and we got Williams-Martinez I, which was a classic. Martinez then fights Pavlik, which was a horrible style matchup for Kelly, and he lost the belts. In my opinion, Pavlik would still be the middleweight champion of the world had the original plan played out.

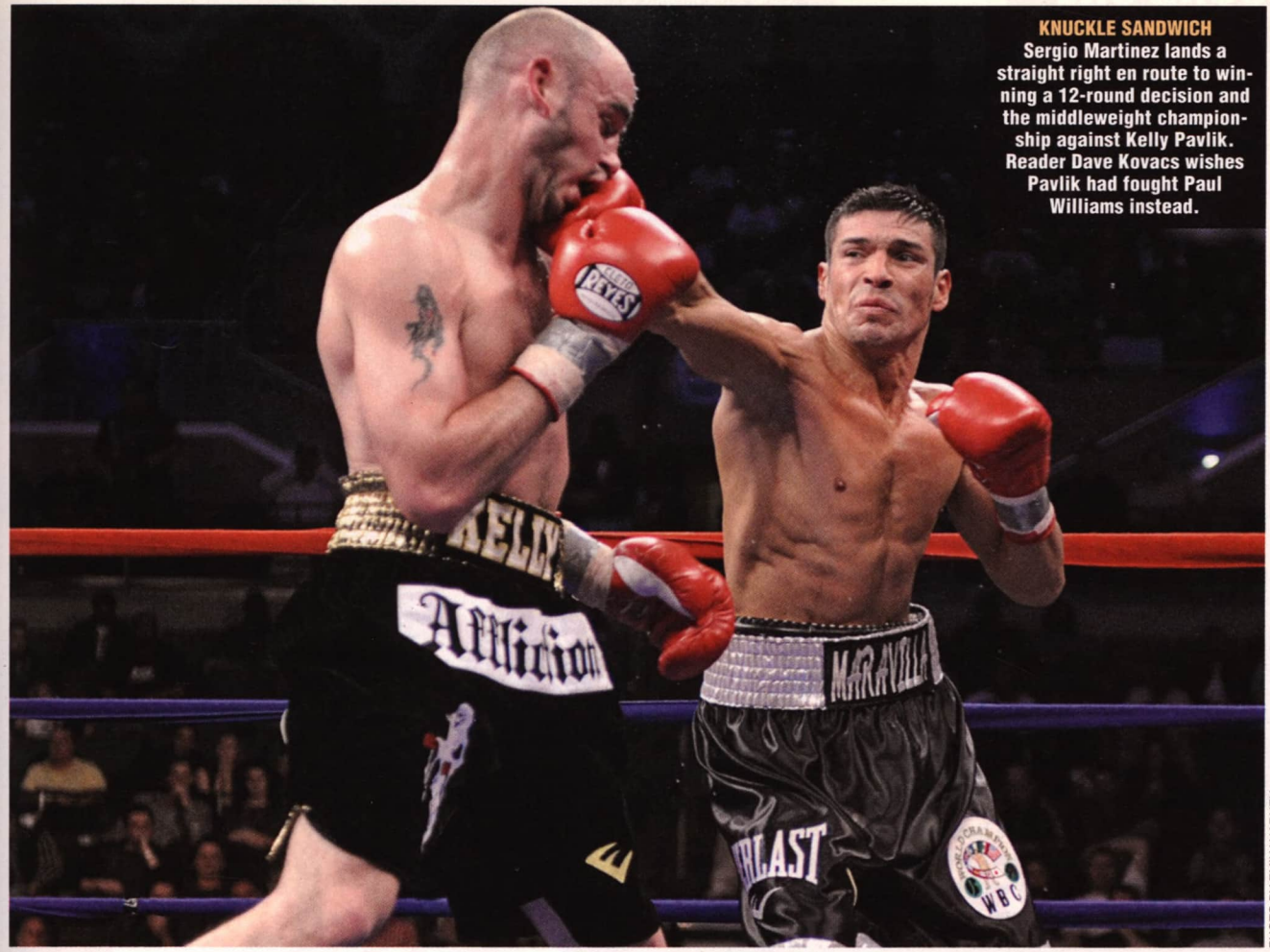
DAVE KOVACS
Youngstown, OH

"Money" Rates

How is it possible that THE RING continues to rate Floyd Mayweather so highly in the pound-for-pound rankings when he fights only once a year against smaller men and boxers past their prime? Are you guys ranking Floyd on the basis of what you think he can do and not what he is actually doing? Real fighters not only fight, but they fight the best their division has to offer.

JERRY CORNELIUS
bottle_rocketjc@yahoo.com

Editor's note: If Mayweather does not sign for a fight by May 1, the one-year anniversary of his bout with Shane Mosley, he will be removed from both the divisional and pound-for-pound ratings for inactivity. It's important to remember that the divisional ratings are objective and based on results within the division. The pound-for-pound ratings are subjective, so opinion plays a significant role.



KNUCKLE SANDWICH
Sergio Martinez lands a straight right en route to winning a 12-round decision and the middleweight championship against Kelly Pavlik. Reader Dave Kovacs wishes Pavlik had fought Paul Williams instead.

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY

Dueling Doctors

I just read a letter from the April issue written by Brian Van Hoose that I initially wrote off as just another uninformed boxing fan that objects to change, even when it's for the better. Then I saw the MD behind his name and felt compelled to write a letter myself. I am shocked that Dr. Van Hoose would take a shot at Dr. Margaret Goodman over her boxer-safety stance and her continual push for better medical standards for boxers.

I suppose Dr. Van Hoose also laments the NFL no longer using leather helmets and racecar drivers actually wearing helmets. After all, they all knew the risks, right? That is such a nonsensical argument. Dr. Goodman is clearly a boxing fan and brings legitimacy to the sport, unlike many others associated with the game. Boxing fans love fighters that refuse to quit, even when they are taking a pounding in the ring from which they may never recover. These fighters have to be protected from themselves, and the kind of medical awareness that Dr. Goodman strives for will only help to keep our fighters healthy for the long term. How can that be a bad thing? Boxing is in desperate need of quality medical standards across the board. We can't rely on a fighter to assess the risks of entering the ring or whether or not to continue a fight he is clearly losing and risk permanent damage or death in the ring. Keep fighting the good fight, Dr. Goodman, and pay no heed to the Brian Van Hooses of the world..

JIM FACTOR
Danville, CA

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E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

Time To Wake Up

I totally agree with Nigel Collins' "Ringside" editorial in the April 2011, titled "The Scorpion And The Frog." Ever since the installation of THE RING championships, they are the only rankings I pay attention to and the only belt that matters to me. Come on, fighters. Wake up! Those alphabet belts you're holding on to don't mean squat to real boxing fans like myself. If you want to be truly recognized as the legit best in your weight class, then you have to be THE RING magazine champion. Bottom line: If you don't have THE RING belt, you've got no right to call yourself the best. Keep punching, Nigel, old school fans like myself have got your back.

FRED SIMMONS
fredsimmonsrulz@yahoo.com ■

Mexico's Latest Gift To Boxing

PRETTY WOMAN
Sainz says boxing is more popular than soccer in Mexico

PHOTO BY G. NEWMAN LOWRANCE/GETTY IMAGES

TV Azteca sportscaster Ines Sainz is everywhere lately. Along with her journalistic duties, she's also a busy model, appearing on the cover of such magazines as the Spanish *Esquire*. She also gained some unwanted publicity while trying to interview New York Jets quarterback Mark Sanchez. Her presence in the Jets' locker room inspired Sanchez' teammates to make some immature comments and created a small sensation in New York newspapers.

Recently hired by Top Rank, Sainz took part in some prefight promotions for the Miguel Cotto- Ricardo Mayorga bout.

So, Ines, are boxing people nicer than football people?

"The boxing people have been wonderful," said Sainz. "They are very professional and real nice. But let me say something about the Jets. I didn't hear anyone say anything aggressive or mean. Someone else heard something bad and reported it. But that's history. Done. Time to move on."

Who are your favorite fighters?

"Julio Cesar Chavez was the first I remember seeing, many years ago. But I'd say my favorite is Manny Pacquiao. He brings a lot of excitement to every fight."

What were your impressions of Cotto and Mayorga?

"Cotto seems shy, but he's focused. He's a good person. And Mayorga is all about the passion. I like the noise he makes before the big show. But at the end of the day, you know what? He's a nice guy too."

Modeling has helped your career. Should someone like me pose in the French *GQ*?

"Men don't have to do it. People ask me why I do it. I tell them I have maybe 10 more years to model. While I can do both the modeling and the sports journalism, I'll do both. I've noticed in Mexico, the female broadcasters do try to look more fashionable. We get involved with the designers, so, in a way, it is like modeling. Television is so visual, and Latin television is always looking for attractive women. But I've noticed in the states, the women journalists are more formal. If I dressed the way female journalists do in the states, I'd be uncomfortable. I'd feel like my mother. In the end, it's all about credibility. I think I have it. I work very hard. I wish my English was better. You should hear me try to interview Manny Pacquiao."

Why do you think boxing is so popular in Mexico?

"Mexicans don't have a lot of the advantages that Americans have. They like to see one of their own people use boxing to make something of their lives."

Would it still be popular if there were no Mexican fighters?

"I think so. Mexico was excited about Cotto-Mayorga, a Puerto Rican and a Nicaraguan."

Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

"I used to think I'd be more involved in soccer. But in Mexico, boxing ratings are so much higher than soccer. It's huge! I would say boxing has knocked out soccer. So I'd better stay close to the world of boxing."

—Don Stradley

IN HARM'S WAY
De La Hoya, Mitchell, and Broner pose with troops and a tank in Basra, Iraq

PHOTO BY ROBERT GASPARRI/GBP

A Humbling Experience

From Rafael Ruelas, Ike Quartey, and Julio Cesar Chavez to Shane Mosley, Bernard Hopkins, and Manny Pacquiao, Oscar De La Hoya was never shy about fighting the toughest opponents. It was, therefore, no surprise that De La Hoya chose to visit some of the most dangerous bases in Iraq when he made a USO tour of the Middle East in March.

Heavyweight Seth Mitchell, middleweight Daniel Jacobs, and lightweight Adrien Broner, all of whom fight for Golden Boy Promotions, accompanied De La Hoya.

"We kind of grew up overnight being there," De La Hoya told the Associated Press. "Our perspective on life changed for everybody in a certain way."

De La Hoya and his team visited eight military bases during the tour, including Basra, where they came under enemy fire.

"We were attacked by mortars in the morning and rockets in the afternoon," said Golden Boy Promotions Chief of Staff Robert Gasparri, who was also on the tour. "We wore flak jackets and helmets when we were out in the field and traveled by Black Hawk helicopters."

None of the danger stopped De La Hoya and the other fighters from conducting numerous interactive boxing clinics, mingling with the troops, signing countless autographs, and posing for hundreds of photos.

The tour left an indelible impression on Team De La Hoya.

"I have to admit, compared to what I have learned our troops go through every day, I think my kind of toughness is different from theirs," said Broner. "I don't think I know anyone as tough as they are."

PHOTO BY ROBERT GASPARRI/GBP

MISMATCH
It looks like this female soldier has beaten Oscar to the punch

"I was very impressed by the morale of the troops," said Gasparri. "They were very upbeat."

De La Hoya said the tour was "humbling."

"I hope that we were able to make a difference in the lives of the troops we met," he said. "I am delighted to continue to help the USO with their mission of uplifting the spirits of our nation's troops, sharing my experiences and encouraging others to support our brave servicemen and servicewomen in any way they can."

BOXING BOOKSHELF

In 1990, Jerry Quarry was in training for a ring comeback at age 45. I disparaged the idea in a piece that alluded to a 1983 *Sports Illustrated* article that showed Quarry already had signs of brain damage from his career as a heavyweight contender in the late 1960s and early '70s. When I subsequently met him for the first time, Quarry thrust that Irish mug out and said, "Do I look brain-dead to you?" He liked me better when I gave him the big scrapbook I compiled on him in the '60s and even more when I went in the tank for him later by telling another reporter, against my own better judgment, that I thought Quarry belonged back in the ring after all.

It would be a similar mistake to hymn *"Hard Luck: The Triumph and Tragedy of 'Irish' Jerry Quarry"* as a definitive, comprehensive biography of the fighter who meant so much to me and other fans during what the authors call the "Golden Era Of Heavyweights." It's a quick and occasionally captivating read that adequately covers the life of the fighter, who twice fought (and lost to) Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier and beat Floyd Patterson, Buster Mathis, Ron Lyle, and Earnie Shavers, from start to its depressing end in 1999 at age 53, after pugilistica dementia had hollowed Quarry out.

What it is not is a critical, dispassionate, and in-depth examination of a man whose path in life was laid out early by Quarry's father Jack, a relentless lout who derided his second son as a "damned sissy ass momma's boy" and, when Jerry got in the sparring ring with his brothers Jimmy and Mike from boyhood on, insisted that they beat the hell out of each other with no qualms to prove that "There's no quit in a Quarry."

"Jack tested their guts whenever possible," say authors Steve Springer and Blake Chavez. "He wasn't out to discover the next musical prodigy. From his own DNA, Doctor Jack Quarrystein was out to create Frankendempsey."

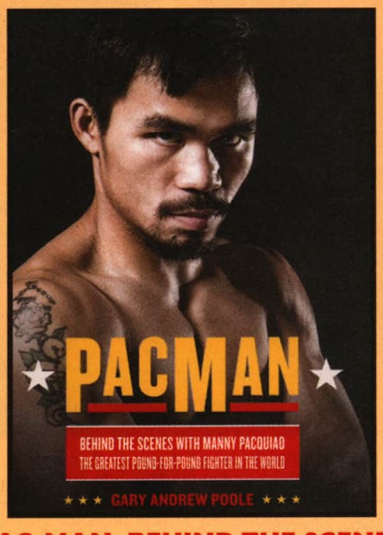
That last sentence is the worst one in the book (if not in the annals of written communication), but it gets a decent run for its money in a narrative that is a little too fawning ("This quality in Quarry, as much as any of the marvelous physical gifts he had been bestowed with, galvanized the public's fascination with the Little Heavyweight that Could. He feared no man. He walked in dark alleys that nobody else dared") and whose attempts at lyricism ("Frazier stayed on Quarry like a couch on a furniture deliveryman's back") and drollery ("His timing was so bad you wouldn't entrust him to wind a watch") fall with a bigger thud than Shavers did when Quarry laid him out at the Garden.

Unevenness is a big problem. There's more detail provided about Quarry's guest shot on *I Dream of Jeannie* than his pivotal second fight with Floyd Patterson a few pages earlier.

The chapters about Quarry's awful decline are straightforward enough, but, when it's mentioned that dementia also afflicted actors Charles Bronson, *Star Trek*'s James ("Scotty") Doohan, Rita Hayworth, and crooner Perry Como, the relevance to the situations of Jerry and his brother Mike (a light heavyweight contender who also ended up with dementia) is debatable, to say the least, and it gives the impression that the narrative is running out of gas.

Hard-core Quarry fans—and I'm a proud charter member of that club—will especially like the photos and George Foreman's confession in his brief forward that he ducked the Bellflower Bomber.

—Pete Ehrmann

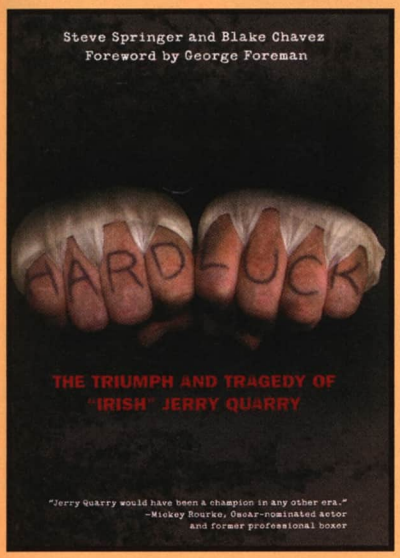


PAC-MAN: BEHIND THE SCENES WITH MANNY PACQUIAO, THE GREATEST POUND FOR POUND FIGHTER IN THE WORLD
By Gary Andrew Poole
Da Capo Press, hard cover
250 pages, $25.95

PacMan: Behind the Scenes with Manny Pacquiao, The Greatest Pound For Pound Fighter In The World, an occasionally illuminating new book from author Gary Andrew Poole, comes at a time when Pacquiao is at the absolute top of his life. He's still a god-like figure in the Philippines, he's not yet been drained of his fortune, he's not yet made any errors in his political career, and, in the ring, he is still the best. He's yet to take the first step downward. But the sense we get from Poole is that the landmines are in place, and it's only a matter of time before Pacquiao steps on one.

Pacquiao is described as a gun-toting hypochondriac, a superstitious Catholic with Attention Deficit Disorder, an unfaithful husband, drinker, and womanizer, and an overgrown kid who likes to play the part of badass gangster. Poole undoubtedly admires Pacquiao as a fighter, but he seems skeptical of Pacquiao the icon. Words like "ridiculous" "childlike," and "immature" appear constantly throughout the text like subliminal messages. Poole also makes much of the Philippine culture's mix of kindness and violence, suggesting that underneath Pacquiao's boyish grin is a moody man with a lust for power. (Pacquiao allegedly threatened to sew a lawyer's lips shut so he wouldn't discuss an illegitimate child of Pacquiao's.) Pacquiao believes his power comes from God, which helps him deal with the unemployed drifters and shuck artists who have figured in boxing entourages throughout history. God wouldn't want him to turn these people away, so he doesn't.

Unfortunately, Poole's book can't be taken as gospel. Poole gained some access to Pacquiao in 2010, but the aloof fighter wouldn't share details of his personal life. Hence, many of Poole's findings come from unnamed sources. This gives the book an uneven tone and keeps it from being a classic.



HARD LUCK: THE TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY OF "IRISH" JERRY QUARRY

By Steve Springer and Blake Chavez

Lyons Press, hard cover
298 pages, $24.95

Poole does some excellent research, such as when he visits "Flash" Elorde's widow in the Philippines and sees that Flash's old car is parked in the living room, so it's disconcerting when Poole also relies on anonymous acquaintances from Pacquiao's past and local gossips. There are vague references to Pacquiao's dark side, but no concrete examples. If wading through so much hearsay isn't aggravating enough, the book's structure is soft, too, like a series of disparate articles hitched together.

Poole, who has written for *The New York Times* and *The Atlantic*, is also compelled to remind readers that he is not some mere Internet blogger, or as he describes them, "freak show boxing geeks playing pretend journalists." Poole's frustration is transparent—despite his pedigree and the amount of traveling he did for this book, he can get no closer to his subject than the nerdy bloggers he so despises.

—Don Stradley

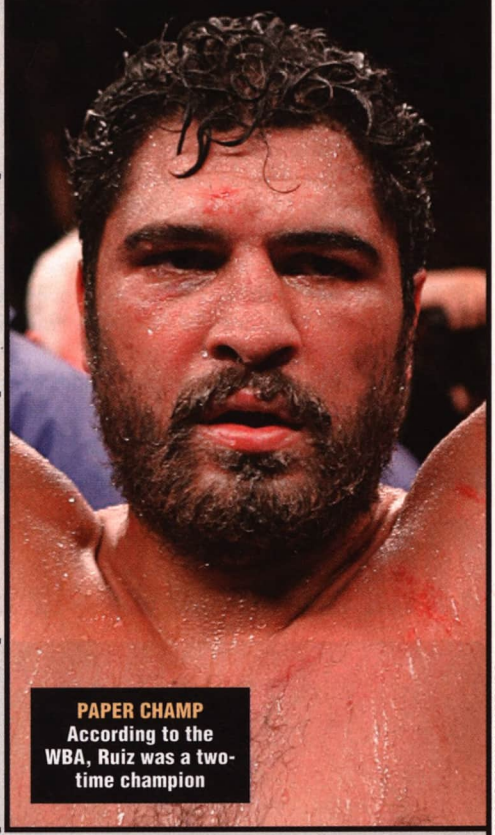
TOP 10 REASONS WE LOVE THE SANCTIONING BODIES

1 John Ruiz was a two-time heavyweight champion. Herbie Hide too. Joe Louis? Just one reign. What a bum!

2 Without a good, solid sanctioning body behind him, we might never have known what a freaking genius Sven Ottke was.

3 Because boxing is so much bigger and more popular today than it was when, say, Muhammad Ali was around. Hey, who's the heavyweight champion again?

4 Unification fights are big business, and you can't have a unification fight with one champion per division.



PAPER CHAMP According to the WBA, Ruiz was a two-time champion

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

5 Because the concept of one "champion" in every division is just a little too boring, don't you think?

6 The fighters like them. Isn't that enough?

7 They are proof positive of Ayn Rand's scary genius.

8 How else are we going to know who the interim, intercontinental junior flyweight silver belt champion is?

9 They employ dozens, maybe hundreds, of slick, amoral conmen and blowhards. If they were put out of business, the number of politicians, lawyers, fight promoters, and publicists would quadruple overnight. And who wants that?

10 Because no fighter, no matter how awful he is, should ever have to go to bed at night a mere "contender." Think of the damage to his (or her) self-esteem!

YOU BE THE JUDGE

Former Las Vegas boxing judge Chuck Giampa provides analysis of officials and scorecards of fights in which he is not directly involved.

A professional boxing judge should know which fighter is winning every minute of each round, the reason why, and by how much (10-9; 10-8, etc.). It's interesting to analyze the scoring of the Saul Alvarez-Matthew Hatton WBC super welterweight title bout and Daniel Ponce De Leon-Adrien Broner junior featherweight contest on the undercard of the same March 5 card in Anaheim, California.

The official scores of the Ponce De Leon-Broner fight were as follows: David Denkin 96-94, Raul Caiz Jr. 96-94, and Tony Crebs 99-91—all for Broner. Although Denkin and Caiz' score were the same, they did not agree on every round, but each scored six rounds to four rounds for Broner, which indicates a close fight. My ringside score was also 96-94 for Broner.

It is, however, difficult to accept the score of judge Tony Crebs 99-91 for Broner. Crebs scored the first round 10-9 for De Leon and proceeded to score the next nine rounds 10-9 each for Broner.

When a judge scores at least two rounds consecutively for the same fighter, the judge has to refocus during the next round and look closely at the action of the fighter who did not win the previous two rounds. The judge should be thinking, *is that fighter really losing each round?*

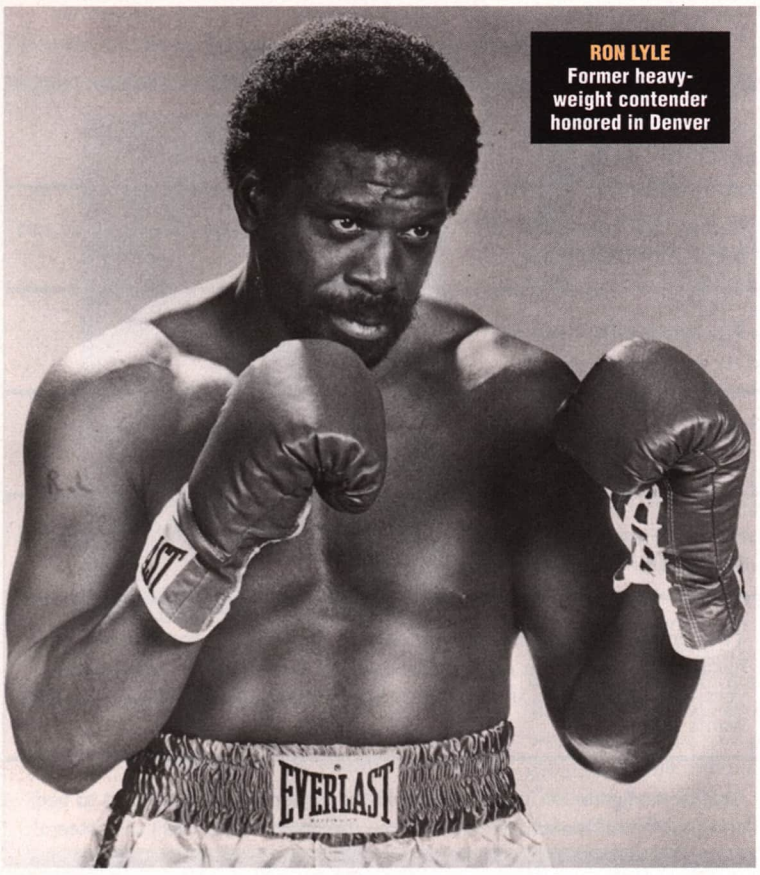
A judge should also be aware that if there are close rounds, the judge should not score all of the rounds to the same fighter by overlooking the action of the other fighter. This doesn't mean that a judge should not score all of the rounds for the same fighter, but only if that fighter has convincingly won each round.

The judge should also be aware that if a fight is relatively close overall, then the scores should indicate that closeness and not be scored a shutout or near shutout for one fighter.

A near shutout is exactly what happened in the Alvarez-Hatton fight. All three judges scored the fight 119-108 for Alvarez, giving "Canelo" all 12 rounds, except for the seventh when referee Lou Moret deducted a point from Alvarez for hitting on the break. The common sense philosophy justifies the scores of Jack Reiss, Raul Caiz Sr., and Joel Scobie. After the second round, providing the judge looked closely at Hatton's ineffectiveness, the third and all future rounds had to be scored for Alvarez because Hatton did not do enough to win any round and Alvarez won each round convincingly.

—Chuck Giampa

Outside The Ropes



RON LYLE
Former heavyweight contender honored in Denver

According to Associated Press, former heavyweight champion **Muhammad Ali** is seeking the release of two American hikers who are being held in Iran. In February, Ali sent two letters to **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** asking for the release of **Josh Fattal** and **Shane Bauer**, who have been held on espionage charges since July 2009. The first letter was sent just before a third hiker, **Sarah Shroud**, was released last year. It is not know if Ali's letter had any effect … The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History has acquired former heavyweight champion **Gene Tunney**'s gloves from the famous 1927 "Long Count" fight with **Jack Dempsey**. "Sporting events are an integral part of American culture," said **Brent D. Glass**, the director of the museum. "During this period in history, boxing brought the whole country together, and fights such as the 'Long Count' were milestones in sporting entertainment, so we are thankful that the Tunney family chose the museum to preserve these objects" … Former heavyweight contender **Ron Lyle**, 68, was inducted into the Golden Gloves Hall of Fame in February in his hometown of Denver, Colorado … According to the *Sports Business Journal*, Top Rank has taken charge of **Manny Pacquiao**'s endorsement deals. The move was made in an attempt to combat internal disorganization surrounding Pacquiao that has kept prospective sponsors away. "We've heard frustration from many companies about their inability to explore personal endorsement and/or corporate branding opportunities," said Top Rank CEO **Bob Arum** and President **Todd du Boef** in a letter to sponsors and sponsor prospects … In

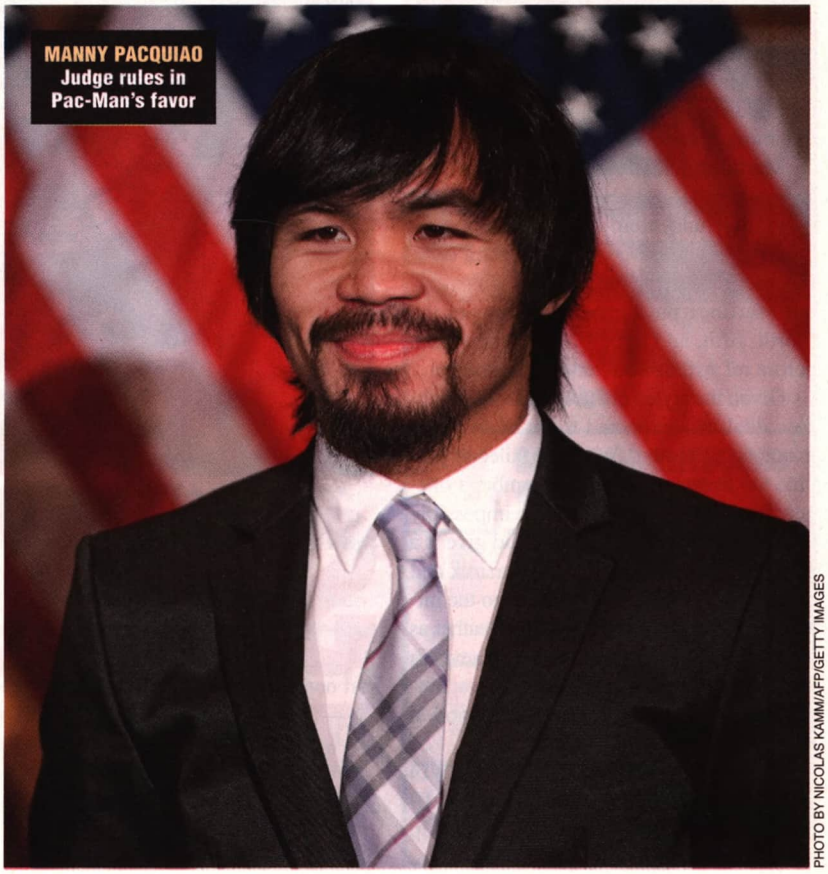
PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

PONCE PUNCH
Did Ponce De Leon get a fair shake from the judges?

OBITUARIES

Trainer **Jimmy O'Pharrow**, 85, died on February 24. O'Pharrow, who was known fondly as "Jimmy O," founded Brooklyn's Starrett City Boxing Club in 1978. "It became a safe haven and a place for young kids to grow," said **Kwani O'Pharrow**, Jimmy O's grandson. "It's an education center, a place to learn physically and mentally." Among the fighters he worked with are **Shannon Briggs**, **Luis Collazo**, and **Dmitry Salita**. O'Pharrow also trained fighters for the Golden Gloves for more than 20 years … Veteran Las Vegas boxing judge **Lou Tabat**, 87, died of colon cancer on February 28. Tabat served in the Air Force during World War II and the Korean War and later served six terms as a Constable in Clark County. "He loved the sport," former Nevada Athletic Commissioner **Marc Ratner** told the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* that Tabat "was a very consistent judge. He was always enthusiastic" … Boxing attorney **Milt Chwasky**, 80, died of cancer on March 13. Chwasky represented such well-known fighters as **Lennox Lewis**, **Michael Spinks**, **Riddick Bowe**, and **Mike McCallum**.

other Pacquiao news, Nevada District Court Judge **Larry R. Ricks** denied a motion by **Floyd Mayweather** and his father, **Floyd Mayweather** Sr., to dismiss the defamation lawsuit Pacquiao brought against them for publicly stating that he was using PEDs, including steroids and human growth hormones. This paved the way for a jury trial … **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals** (PETA) demonstrated outside the home of former heavyweight champion **Mike Tyson**, protesting Tyson's role in pigeon racing in his new TV show *Taking On Tyson*, which is broadcast by the Animal Planet network … WBA light heavyweight titleholder **Beibut Shumenov** has filed a lawsuit against **Goossen Tutor Promotions**, seeking confirmation that a promotional agreement between Shumenov and Goossen Tutor is terminated. "We have a valid and enforceable contract and will pursue our legal rights and have formally informed Shumenov, advising him of that," said **Dan Goossen** … Philadelphia boxing promoter **Damon Feldman**, 41, pleaded "no contest" to charges he fixed fights. Judge Gregory Mallon sentenced Feldman to two years probation, during which he is banned from promoting fights. He was also ordered to make $7,500 in restitution to an investor … **Tairone Silva**, considered one of Brazil's most promising boxers, was shot and killed by a police officer after an argument in March. The unidentified officer shot Silva, 17, several times. He was arrested and taken to a police station.



MANNY PACQUIAO
Judge rules in Pac-Man's favor

PHOTO BY NICOLAS KAMM/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

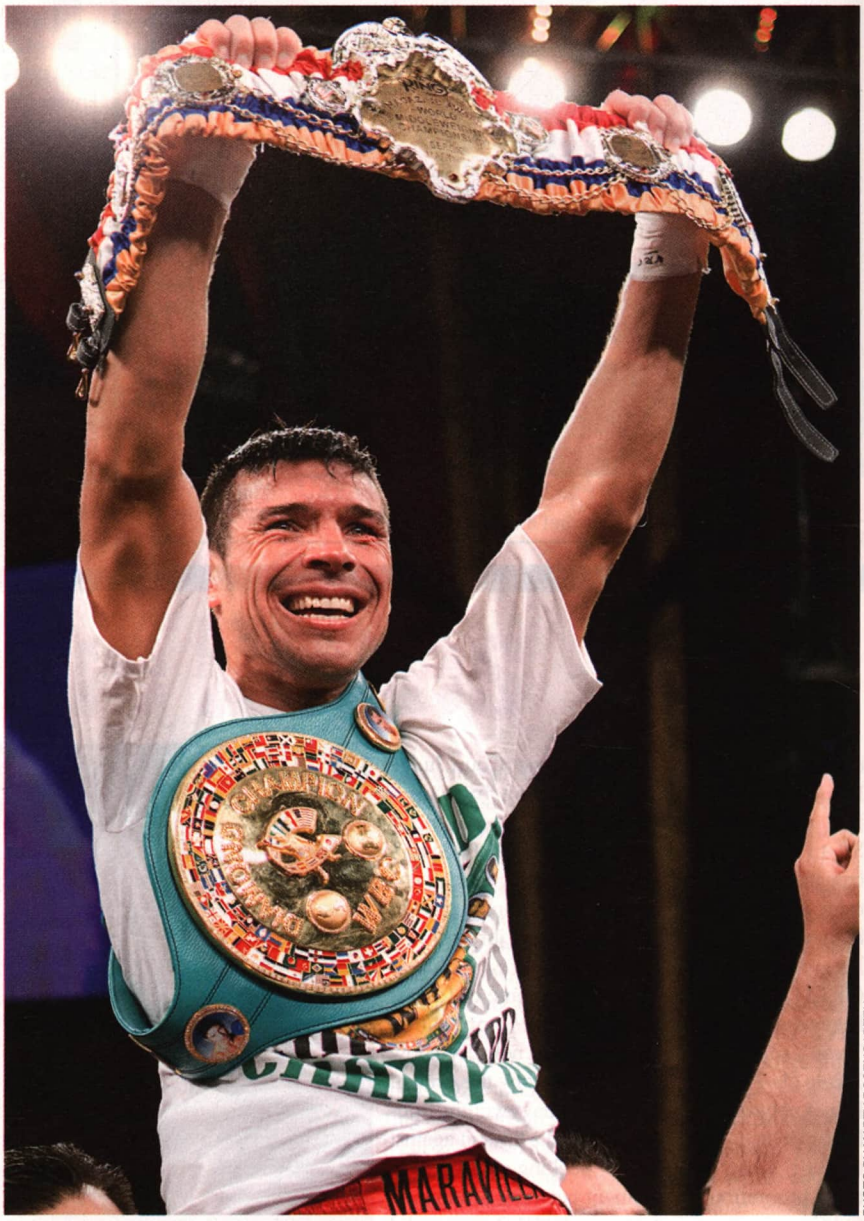


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

SERGIO MARTINEZ

Sergiy Dzinziruk's last name is a mouthful for most English-speaking fans. With an excellent jab and defense, the 1996 Ukrainian Olympian is just as tricky in the ring for most opponents. Many expected him to give Sergio Martinez problems, but, once again, the middleweight champion proved he's not like most opponents.

Martinez actually outjabbed Dzinziruk and managed to get his punches through the previously unbeaten junior middleweight beltholder's defense with surprising ease. Dzinziruk had never been dropped as a pro, but Martinez put him on the floor in the fourth, fifth, and three times in the eighth before ref Arthur Mercante Jr. stepped in.

Given the styles involved, this all-southpaw dual was expected to be more chess match than shootout. While he failed to provide the fireworks of last November's one-punch kayo of Paul Williams, an impossibly tall order at any rate, Martinez did give it a shot. He remained in front of Dzinziruk and chose to outwork him rather than go the hit-and-run route. Though he ate some leather as a result, particularly in the sixth and seventh rounds, Martinez's strategy led to a fan-friendly fight against a guy who's good at making his opponents look bad.

It was yet another impressive win against a top-level opponent for the 2010 Fighter of the Year and a big first step toward repeating in 2011.

RATINGS ANALYSIS

For Period Ended March 20, 2011

Heavyweights: Nicolay Valuev (eighth last issue) exits following a prolonged inactive period. This allows Alexander Dimitrenko (ninth last issue) and Chris Arreola (10th last issue) to advance one place each. Kubrat Pulev debuts at 10.

Cruiserweights: No changes.

Light Heavyweights: No changes.

Super Middleweights: No changes.

Middleweights: Kelly Pavlik (second last issue) departs because he's publicly stated he will no longer campaign at 160. Pavlik's departure allows everyone rated two and below to rise one rung each and makes room for the debut of David Lemieux at 10.

Junior Middleweights: Miguel Cotto (third last issue) takes over the top spot, pushing down Kermit Cintron (first last issue) and Alfredo Angulo (second last issue) one spot each. This is based on Cotto's activity and Cintron and Angulo's inactivity. Yuri Foreman (sixth last issue) exits due to his TKO loss to Powel Wolak, who enters at seven. Wolak's inclusion bumps up Vanes Martirosyan (seventh last issue) to six. Saul Alvarez (10th last issue) changes places with Cornelius Bundrage (ninth last issue) also based on greater activity, which includes Alvarez's unanimous decision over Matthew Hatton.

Welterweights: Miguel Cotto (fourth last issue) exits since he's now fighting exclusively at junior middleweight, making room for everyone four and below to move up one place each and allowing Mike Jones to debut at 10.

Junior Welterweights: Zab Judah returns to the ratings at seven, replacing the fighter he beat, Kaizer Mabuza (seventh last issue), who departs after being stopped by Judah in the seventh.

Lightweights: Brandon Rios (fifth last issue) surges to number one after stopping previous number-one contender Miguel Acosta, who trades places with Rios and falls to five.

Junior Lightweights: No changes.

Featherweights: Daniel Ponce De Leon (fifth last issue) maintains his position after his decision loss at junior lightweight to Adrien Broner because the fight was at a higher weight class and concluded in a controversial, close decision.

Junior Featherweights: No changes.

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior Bantamweights: No changes.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: Former strawweight titlist Roman Gonzalez is on a three-fight winning streak at 108 pounds, which was and has enough to bump out and replace Jesus Geles (10th last issue).

Strawweights: No changes.

Pound-for-Pound: Sergio Martinez (fourth last issue) trades places with Nonito Donaire (third last issue) and moves back to three, based on his spectacular stoppage of previously undefeated Sergiy Dzinziruk.

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at ringtv.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

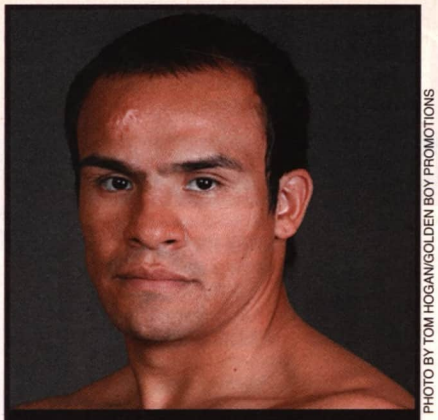


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

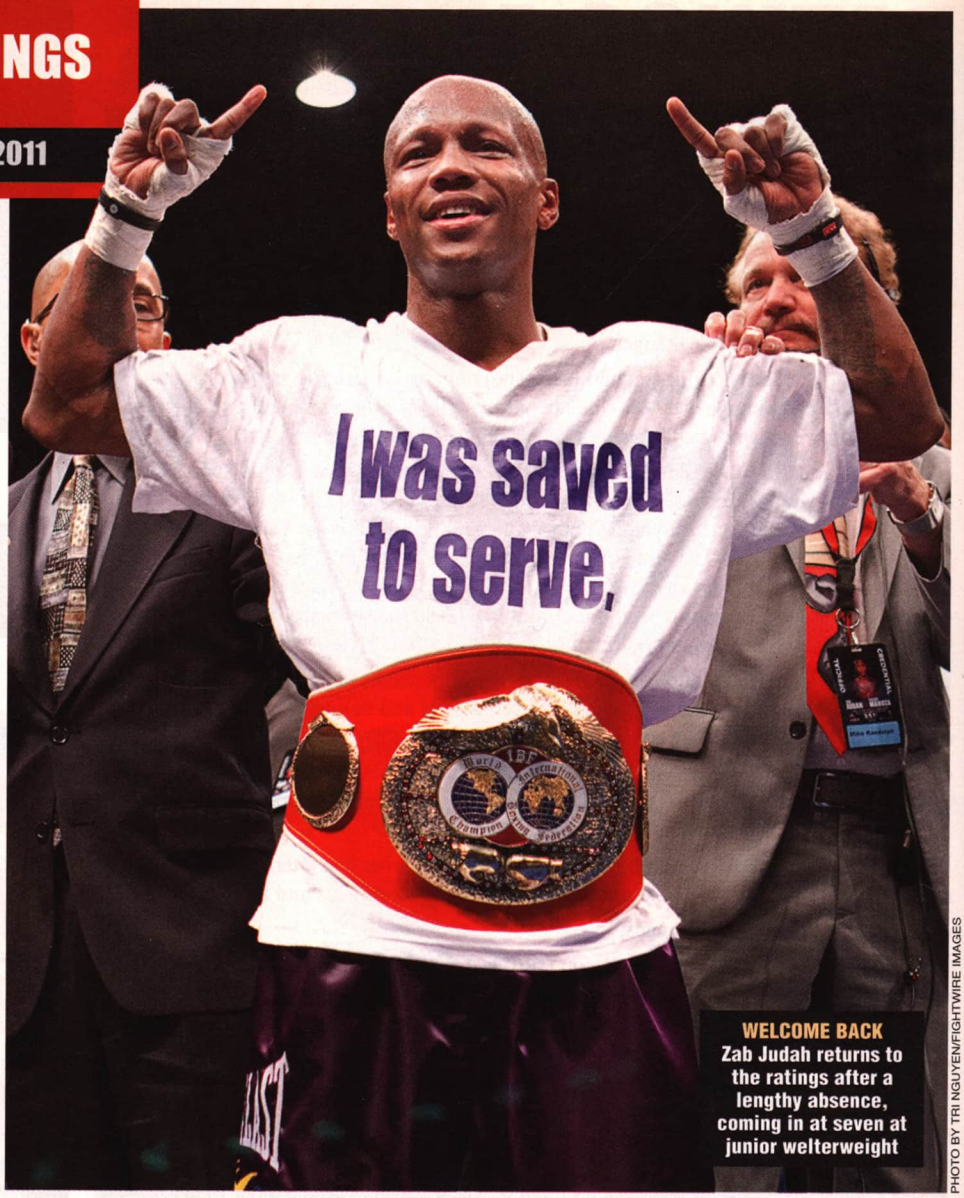
POUND FOR POUND

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO** *Welterweight*
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER** *Welterweight*
3. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** *Middleweight*
4. **NONITO DONAIRE** *Bantamweight*
5. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ** *Lightweight*
6. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM** *Flyweight*
7. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** *Heavyweight*
8. **TIM BRADLEY** *Junior Welterweight/ Welterweight*
9. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** *Featherweight*
10. **GIOVANI SEGURA** *Junior Flyweight*

The RING RATINGS

For Period Ended March 20, 2011

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to ringtv.com



WELCOME BACK
Zab Judah returns to the ratings after a lengthy absence, coming in at seven at junior welterweight

PHOTO BY TRI NGUYEN/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 55-3 (49)

1. **VITALI KLITSCHKO**
Ukraine 42-2 (39)
2. **DAVID HAYE**
England 25-1 (23)
3. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN**
Russia 21-0 (15)
4. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
Poland 43-1 (28)
5. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV**
Uzbekistan 26-1-1 (17)
6. **EDDIE CHAMBERS**
Philadelphia, PA 36-2 (18)
7. **DENIS BOYTSOV**
Russia 27-0 (22)
8. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO**
Ukraine 30-1 (20)
9. **CHRIS ARREOLA**
Riverside, CA 30-2 (26)
10. **KUBRAT PULEV**
Bulgaria 11-0 (5)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
Philadelphia, PA 24-2 (12)
2. **MARCO HUCK**
Yugoslavia 31-1 (23)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
Poland 44-2-1 (32)
4. **DENIS LEBEDEV**
Russia 21-1 (16)
5. **TROY ROSS**
Canada 24-2 (16)
6. **DANNY GREEN**
Australia 31-3 (27)
7. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
Italy 27-3-1 (11)
8. **OLA AFOLABI**
England 16-2-3 (7)
9. **GUILLERMO JONES**
Panama 37-3-2 (29)
10. **YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ**
Cuba 24-1 (13)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JEAN PASCAL
Haiti 26-1-1 (16)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
Philadelphia, PA 51-5-2 (32)
2. **TAVORIS CLOUD**
Tallahassee, FL 22-0 (18)
3. **CHAD DAWSON**
New Haven, CT 29-1 (17)
4. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
5. **NATHAN CLEVERLY**
Wales 21-0 (10)
6. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
Romania 27-2 (15)
7. **KARO MURAT**
Iraq 22-1 (13)
8. **BEIBUT SHUMENOV**
Kazakhstan 11-1 (7)
9. **CHRIS HENRY**
Houston, TX 25-2 (20)
10. **GABRIEL CAMPILLO**
Spain 20-3 (7)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANDRE WARD**
Oakland, CA 23-0 (13)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
Romania 28-0 (23)
3. **CARL FROCH**
England 27-1 (21)
4. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
Denmark 43-2 (32)
5. **ANDRE DIRRELL**
Flint, MI 19-1 (13)
6. **SAKIO BIKA**
Cameroon 28-5-2 (19)
7. **ROBERT STIEGLITZ**
Germany 39-2 (23)
8. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
Mexico 29-3 (22)
9. **GLEN JOHNSON**
Jamaica 51-14-2 (35)
10. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
Armenia 32-2 (26)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: SERGIO MARTINEZ
Argentina 47-2-2 (26)

1. **FELIX STURM**
Germany 35-2-1 (15)
2. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
Germany 34-3-1 (16)
3. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
Augusta, GA 39-2 (27)
4. **DANIEL GEALE**
Australia 24-1 (15)
5. **MATTHEW MACKLIN**
England 28-2 (19)
6. **SEBASTIAN ZBIK**
Germany 30-0 (10)
7. **DMITRY PIROG**
Russia 17-0 (14)
8. **DAVID LOPEZ**
Mexico 40-12 (23)
9. **HASSAN N'DAM N'JIKAM**
France 25-0 (17)
10. **DAVID LEMIEUX**
Canada 25-0 (24)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 36-2 (29)
2. **KERMIT CINTRON**
   Reading, PA 32-3-1 (28)
3. **ALFREDO ANGULO**
   Mexico 19-1 (16)
4. **RYAN RHODES**
   England 45-4 (31)
5. **SECHEW POWELL**
   Brooklyn, NY 26-2 (15)
6. **VANES MARTIROSYAN**
   Armenia 29-0 (18)
7. **PAWEL WOLAK**
   Poland 29-1 (19)
8. **SERGIY DZINZIRUK**
   Ukraine 37-1 (23)
9. **SAUL ALVAREZ**
   Mexico 36-0-1 (26)
10. **CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE**
    Detroit, MI 30-4 (18)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 52-3-2 (38)
2. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Grand Rapids, MI 41-0 (25)
3. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 27-0 (21)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 46-6-1 (39)
5. **JAN ZAVECK**
   Slovenia 31-1 (18)
6. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
   Ghana 35-4 (20)
7. **VYACHESLAV SENCHENKO**
   Ukraine 31-0 (20)
8. **RAFAL JACKIEWICZ**
   Poland 37-9-1 (19)
9. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 27-0 (11)
10. **MIKE JONES**
    Philadelphia, PA 24-0 (18)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 27-0 (11)
2. **AMIR KHAN**
   England 24-1 (17)
3. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 29-2 (27)
4. **DEVON ALEXANDER**
   St. Louis, MO 21-1 (13)
5. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 31-4-1 (13)
6. **JUAN URANGO**
   Colombia 22-3-1 (17)
7. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 41-6 (28)
8. **LAMONT PETERSON**
   Washington, D.C. 28-1-1 (14)
9. **VICTOR ORTIZ**
   Garden City, KN 28-2-2 (22)
10. **PAUL MCCLOSKEY**
    England 22-0 (12)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 52-5-1 (38)

1. **BRANDON RIOS**
   Lubbock, TX 27-0-1 (20)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 55-7-2 (32)
3. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 27-3 (22)
4. **ALI FUNEKA**
   South Africa 30-3-3 (25)
5. **MIGUEL ACOSTA**
   Venezuela 28-4-2 (22)
6. **JOHN MURRAY**
   England 30-0 (18)
7. **PAULUS MOSES**
   Namibia 27-1 (19)
8. **URBANO ANTILLON**
   Mexico 28-2 (20)
9. **MIGUEL VAZQUEZ**
   Mexico 28-3 (12)
10. **ROBERT GUERRERO**
    Gilroy, CA 28-1-1 (18)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 30-4 (12)
2. **RICKY BURNS**
   Scotland 31-2 (8)
3. **TAKASHI UCHIYAMA**
   Japan 17-0 (14)
4. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 24-1-1 (15)
5. **JORGE SOLIS**
   Mexico 40-2-2 (29)
6. **JUAN CARLOS SALGADO**
   Mexico 22-1-1 (16)
7. **JORGE LINARES**
   Venezuela 30-1 (19)
8. **TAKAHIRO AO**
   Japan 20-2-1 (9)
9. **ARGENIS MENDEZ**
   Dominican Republic 18-1 (9)
10. **JASON LITZAU**
    St. Paul, MN 28-2 (21)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 30-0 (27)
2. **YURIORKIS GAMBOA**
   Cuba 19-0 (15)
3. **CHRIS JOHN**
   Indonesia 44-0-2 (22)
4. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 34-11-2 (22)
5. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON**
   Mexico 41-3 (34)
6. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ**
   Mexico 39-12-2 (23)
7. **ELIO ROJAS**
   Dominican Republic 22-1 (13)
8. **BERNABE CONCEPCION**
   Philippines 28-4-1 (15)
9. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 39-6 (35)
10. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA**
    Japan 29-3 (12)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
   Japan 37-4-3 (23)
2. **AKIFUMI SHIMODA**
   Japan 23-2-1 (10)
3. **RYOL LI LEE**
   Japan 17-2-1 (8)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGDAENGGYM**
   Thailand 42-2 (29)
5. **STEVE MOLITOR**
   Canada 33-1 (12)
6. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
   Cuba 8-0 (6)
7. **RICARDO CORDOBA**
   Panama 37-3-2 (23)
8. **TAKALANI NDLOVU**
   South Africa 31-6 (18)
9. **JEFF MATHEBULA**
   South Africa 24-3-2 (14)
10. **WILFREDO VAZQUEZ JR.**
    Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (17)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 26-1 (18)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO**
   Panama 30-1-1 (10)
3. **JOSEPH AGBEKO**
   Ghana 28-2 (22)
4. **ABNER MARES**
   Mexico 21-0-1 (13)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 44-3-2 (34)
6. **YONNHY PEREZ**
   Colombia 20-1-1 (14)
7. **ERIC MOREL**
   Madison, WI 43-2 (21)
8. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 35-3-1 (27)
9. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 24-1 (15)
10. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
    Philippines 28-2-3 (17)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 34-6-2 (24)
2. **TOMAS ROJAS**
   Mexico 35-12-1 (23)
3. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 14-3-1 (9)
4. **KOHEI KONO**
   Japan 25-5 (9)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 33-0-2 (19)
6. **DRIAN FRANCISCO**
   Philippines 20-0-1 (16)
7. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
   Mexico 41-6-2 (18)
8. **CESAR SEDA**
   Puerto Rico 20-0 (15)
9. **YOTA SATO**
   Japan 20-2-1 (11)
10. **JUAN ALBERTO ROSAS**
    Mexico 32-6 (26)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM
Thailand 79-3-1 (43)

1. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 36-3-3 (23)
2. **LUIS CONCEPCION**
   Panama 22-1 (17)
3. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 36-6-2 (17)
4. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 51-3-1 (21)
5. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
   South Africa 26-2 (17)
6. **JULIO CESAR MIRANDA**
   Mexico 35-5-1 (28)
7. **ROCKY FUENTES**
   Philippines 28-6-2 (18)
8. **MILAN MELINDO**
   Philippines 24-0 (8)
9. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico 41-6 (24)
10. **TOMONOBU SHIMIZU**
    Japan 17-3-1 (8)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: GIOVANI SEGURA
Mexico 26-1-1 (22)

1. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 34-1-1 (6)
2. **GILBERTO KEB BAAS**
   Mexico 35-20-4 (22)
3. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 30-4-2 (12)
4. **RODEL MAYOL**
   Philippines 27-5-2 (21)
5. **LUIS ALBERTO LAZARTE**
   Argentina 48-9-2 (18)
6. **CARLOS TAMARA**
   Colombia 21-6 (15)
7. **BRIAN VILORIA**
   Waipahu, HI 28-3 (16)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 32-2-3 (21)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 26-1 (15)
10. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
    Nicaragua 28-0 (23)

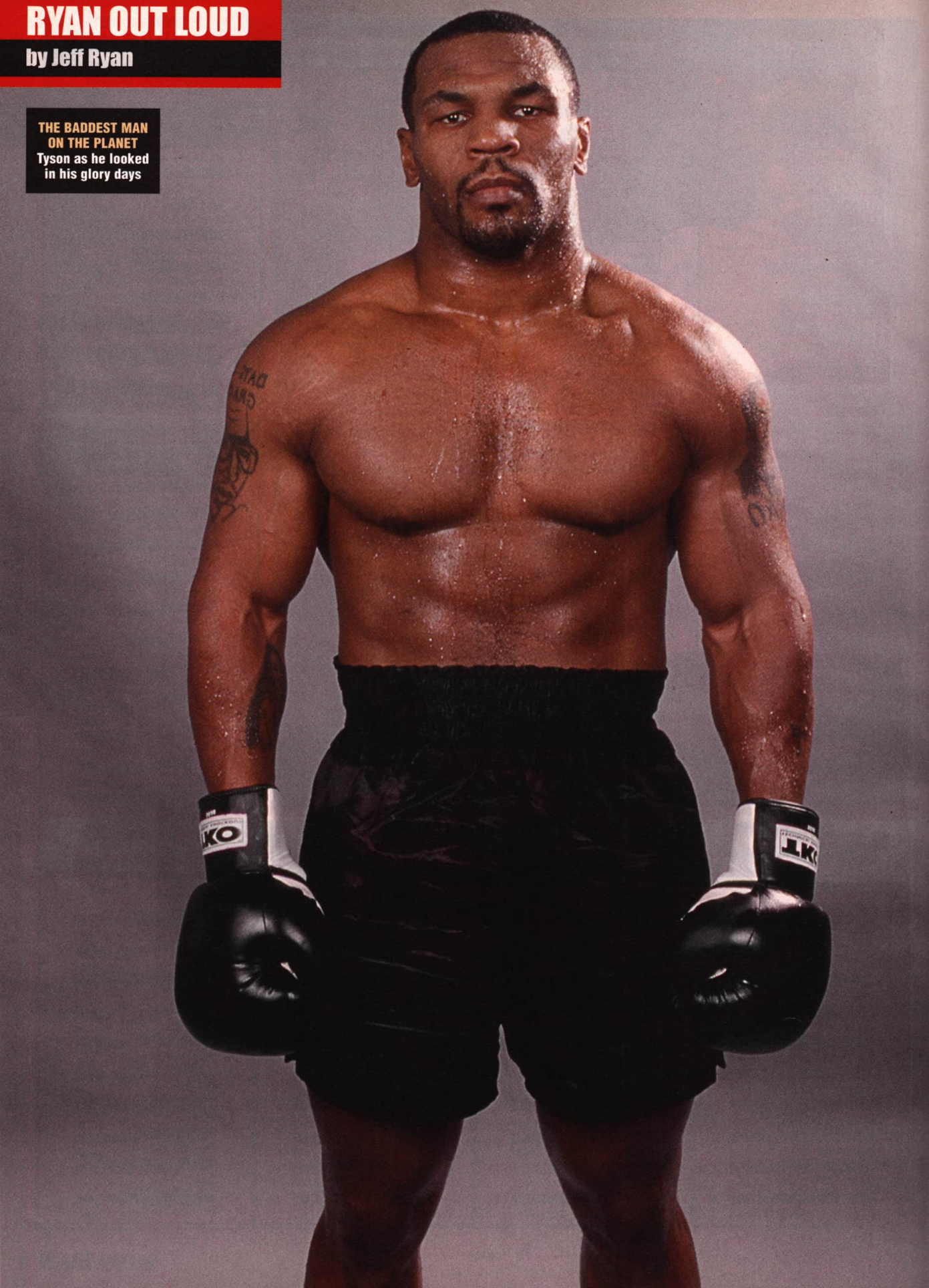
STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
   South Africa 21-0 (15)
2. **KAZUTO IOKA**
   Japan 7-0 (5)
3. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 35-1-1 (13)
4. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 29-1-1 (17)
5. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 27-1-3 (15)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 25-5-1 (21)
7. **JUAN PALACIOS**
   Nicaragua 27-3 (21)
8. **DENVER CUELLO**
   Philippines 25-4-6 (15)
9. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 24-4 (10)
10. **MICHAEL LANDERO**
    Philippines 14-4-4 (4)

RYAN OUT LOUD

by Jeff Ryan



THE BADDEST MAN ON THE PLANET
Tyson as he looked in his glory days

Mike Of Amnesia

That ought to be some riveting induction speech Mike Tyson delivers when he addresses the masses at the International Boxing Hall of Fame in June. Presumably, "Kid Dynamite" will talk about racing his pigeons and how early he goes to bed nowadays, and perhaps even fill us in on what it was like working on the set of *The Hangover 2*. What we shouldn't expect, though, is his recollection of short-circuiting Trevor Berbick's nervous system, cracking the concrete chin of Larry Holmes, or decimating Michael Spinks in 91 seconds.

Listening to Tyson tell it these days, he can hardly recall when he was the baddest of them all. He can barely remember his era of dismember.

"I remember my drug days better than I remember my fighting days," he says. "Even the good times were really not good."

Tyson has gone to great effort recently to explain that he didn't like the person he was as a fighter and tries to forget that time in his life. He refers to his boxing career as "insignificant." Gee, if he sliced the baloney any thicker he could work at a deli counter.

Maybe "Leg-Iron Mike" is attempting to rehabilitate his image, and he figures that the further he distances himself from that ruthless warrior who tried to drive nose bones into brains, the better chance he has of doing that. Or perhaps he is simply tired of talking about something he *was* because it reminds him that he's no longer in his athletic/attention-attracting/money-earning prime. Whatever the reason for his, uh, sudden memory loss, it doesn't matter. The rest of us remember like it was yesterday.

We remember when the man-child replaced the man-boobs at the top of the heavyweight division and the era of the Berbicks, Tony Tubbses, Bonecrusher Smiths, Pinklon Thomases, and Tony Tuckers came to a merciful end. We remember how the heavyweight title was unified for the first time in almost a decade and how challengers started getting into better shape for fear that they might actually be killed if they trained at their usual half-speed.

We remember the black trunks, the sockless feet in black shoes, and a white towel with a hole cut through it serving as a robe. We remember a truly maniacal fighting machine that took conventional boxing wisdom and beat it to its knees. Can't fight angry because you lose focus? Can't come into the ring with no sweat on your body and start fast? Can't be built like a linebacker *and* have blazing hand speed? Can't lead with the uppercut? Can't train old school in this era of modern exercise equipment and computer technology? Can't keep moving forward constantly?

Wanna bet?

We remember one man being responsible for the mainstream rediscovering the Sweet Science and the heavyweight championship, a once-splintered joke of a designation, becoming the most prestigious title in all of sports once again. We remember him starring in a TV commercial for the most mainstream of products, Pepsi, at a time when the most famous face on earth, Muhammad Ali, was endorsing roach spray. We remember a king of the big men who literally had no cares about who the next opponent would be. We remember the extra stuff that created the legend, like putting a fist through a wall in the dressing room in Atlantic City before his biggest fight or staying up all night watching film of Jack Dempsey.

We remember the intensity of the training, the eagerness to learn, and the pride of holding *the* title. We remember that right cross to the ribs/right uppercut to the chin combination. We remember that slight dipping of the knees to generate extra power, the peek-a-boo defense, and the constant head movement that was an incredibly effective weapon before it gradually disappeared. We remember a kid taking the fight game on his broad shoulders without ever needing an equally famous rival to play off. We remember when boxing was on the cover of general interest sports magazines and even newsweeklies. We remember when our elderly widowed neighbor, who couldn't name one athlete since Joe DiMaggio retired, knew his name and what he did for a living.

Just in case none of this jogs your memory, Mike, feel free to print out a copy of this page and bring it to Canastota with you on the weekend in June. That's the weekend a lot of us are going to forget about prison sentences, car crashes, Barbara Walters interviews, and Buster Douglas, and any of that other bad stuff. It's the weekend when we're going to talk only about that time when the baddest man on the planet didn't just have the whole wide world in his taped fists, but the whole universe too.

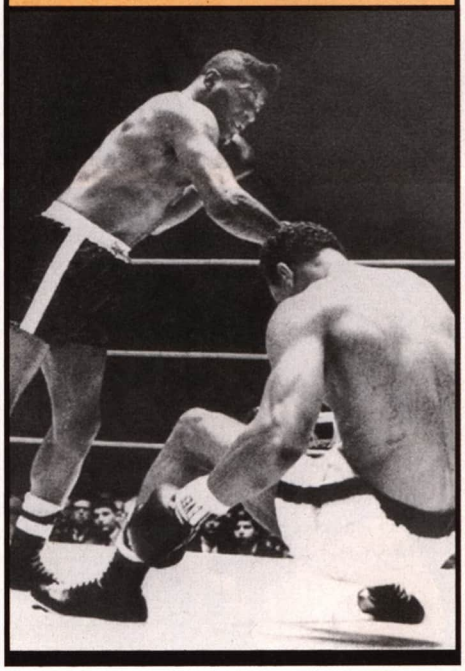
Mitch Green's bridgework flying out of his mouth, Marvis Frazier crumbling in the corner in 30 seconds, the cover of *Sports Illustrated*. Are you sure none of this rings a bell?

THE PITTSBURGH STEALERS

In March, the Pittsburgh Historic Review Commission rejected attempts to have the city's aged Civic Arena granted special historic status, a designation that would save it from demolition. And though the decision isn't final, financial interest in developing the land beneath the 50-year-old building and the local community's disdain for the old place practically guarantee the former home of hockey's Pittsburgh Penguins is soon to be gone.

For years, this column has chronicled the demise of arenas with a boxing history, and this is another entry on that list. While the building nicknamed "The Igloo" probably isn't one of the first hundred places that come to mind when one thinks of fight venues, you might be surprised to learn that it hosted no less than five Hall of Famers. It was the site of Sugar Ray Robinson's 198th and final career bout, a points loss to Joey Archer in 1965. Two years earlier, Cassius Clay kayoed Charlie Powell there. Floyd Patterson halted Bill McMurray in 1967, Sonny Liston blasted out Roger Rischer in 1968, and Larry Holmes got up from a vicious knockdown to stop Renaldo Snipes there in 1981, thus keeping alive the lucrative and highly anticipated shootout against Cooney.

VENUE DOWN FOR THE COUNT
Patterson knocks out Bill McMurray at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena in 1967



PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS

The last word on everything from the prostrate to the prostate:

WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?
Wolak rips into Foreman en route to TKO win

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

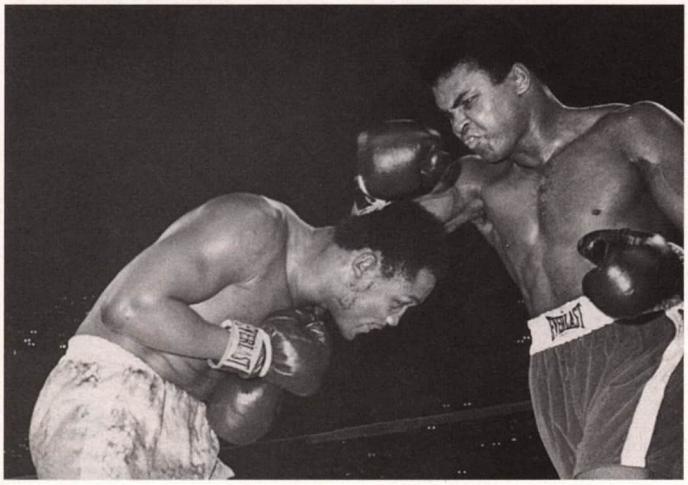
• Nonito Donaire was smashing against Fernando Montiel—literally. But the predictable comparisons to Pacquiao that came gushing forth from the media are absurd. Both fighters are exceptional talents with Filipino heritage. Let's stop right there. When Donaire copies "Pac-Man" and starts climbing weight classes as though they're branches leading to a tree house, then the comparison talk can commence.

• By the way, why is Donaire working with Victor Conte, the trainer/nutritionist who did prison time for conspiracy to distribute steroids? Sure, Donaire says he welcomes any test for performance-enhancing drugs, and there's no proof that he's anything but clean. But the better he fights, the more doubters there will be who wonder if perhaps he's found a way to mask some illegal substance in his system. With so many other sports gurus out there to choose from, Donaire shouldn't even enter Conte's zip code.

• If Bernard Hopkins is crazy enough to face Jean Pascal in Canada again on May 21, then "B-Hop" can't complain if he gets screwed a second time. And don't tell me about neutral judges providing peace of mind for Hopkins and Co. The list of hometown decisions rendered by neutral judges is longer than Vitali Klitschko's trench coat.

• This is out of the playbook labeled, *How To Not Recruit New Fight Fans*: An advertisement sent by my cable provider to hype the PPV telecast of Miguel Cotto-Ricardo Mayorga arrived in my mailbox two days after the bout took place. *Sigh*.

• Some of us still won't believe Haye and Klitschko are finally squaring off until that



Happy An

March 8 was the 40th anniversary of "The Fight of the Century," Joe Frazier's 15-round unanimous decision over Ali at Madison Square Garden. It was a treat looking back at some of the film clips and photos of that amazing event and hearing folks who were there describe the feeling of being at the world's epicenter for one magical night. Ali-Frazier was an epic battle that offered a little bit of everything from social signifi-

THE FIGHT
The undefeated duo of Frazier and Ali go to war

NOT SO FAST
Comparing Donaire to Pacquiao is premature

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

moment when they touch gloves at the conclusion of the ref's instructions. Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me five times, shame on me.

• Here's proof that at least some people believe Tyson has truly mellowed: A group of mental cases from PETA were protesting outside the ex-champ's Las Vegas home because they don't like his pigeon racing. Do you think they'd be outside Tyson's door if he still lived in the Brooklyn ghetto or if he'd just had a street fight with Mitch Green the other day?

• Yuri Foreman is a good technician and a gusty kid, but it's no surprise that his comeback from last summer's loss to Cotto ended with him absorbing a pounding from Pawel Wolak. Foreman's lack of power may not have hindered him for the first few years of his career, but it's a major problem since he's stepped up his level of opposition. By the way, let's start a movement to get Yuri's last name changed. No boxer who punches so softly should be named Foreman. It's like a guy named LaMotta having a glass jaw.

• So who does Cotto face now? Well, a rematch against Antonio Margarito sure is a better idea than the Cotto-Pacquiao sequel Bob Arum has mentioned.

• As for Sugar Ray Leonard's decision to compete on *Dancing With The Stars*, well, after the sorry performances of Mayweather and Evander Holyfield, why would *any* fighter want to risk another humbling? Heck, "Money" and "The Real Deal" were to dancing what Ginger Rogers was to infighting.

• It was a lot more fun when Arum and Don King loathed each other. When the two legendary promoters teamed up to stage Cotto-Mayorga recently, they rained compliments on each other like they were tossing confetti on New Year's Eve. If this buddy-buddy stuff keeps up, you can envision the two old goats sitting by a shuffleboard court in Florida or Las Vegas one day, trading war stories and talking about their urinary problems.

niversary

cance to record purses to Frank Sinatra working as a ringside photographer. It also had something else: two undefeated records on the line.

While we criticize managers for obsessing over keeping their fighters' resumes unblemished (sometimes at the expense of the athlete's development), the truth is that there remains an aura about the unbeaten record. No matter who squares off at Wimbledon, the two finalists have lost many times before in their careers. Baseball, basketball, hockey, and (with the exception of the '72 Miami Dolphins) football champions never go undefeated. Boxing, though, is the one sport that can match perfection vs. perfection. And yet, even that's extremely rare.

Sugar Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns, Holmes-Gerry Cooney, and Tyson-Spinks are three examples that come to mind when we talk about true *superfights* that are battles of the unbeaten and untied. But that's about it in my viewing lifetime. Neither Wladimir Klitschko-David Haye nor Timothy Bradley-Amir Khan would fall into that category. The same goes for the showdown that tops all wish lists, Manny Pacquiao vs. Floyd Mayweather.

To me, *that's* what makes the first Ali-Frazier war so special. Two heavyweights of such skill and popularity fighting, as Spinks once said, because somebody's '0' had to go. ■

Solution To Senseless Feud

Can you imagine the Dodgers and the Yankees winning their respective pennants and then failing to play a World Series because their owners can't find a way to deal with each other? It happens regularly in boxing, and these days it's worse than ever.

The identity of a fighter's promoter has taken on tremendous significance even though it should have none whatsoever. I won't bother to list all the lawsuits and complaints between Top Rank and Golden Boy, the two most powerful promotional companies. Frankly, I find the details boring, and I'm sure plenty of fans agree. But the way things stand, it's next to impossible for fighters from the two stables to get into the same ring with each other. So if bantamweight sensation Nonito Donaire, for example, remains with Bob Arum's Top Rank (apparently it would be against his will), the possibility of his facing Golden Boy's exciting Abner Mares ranges from slim to none.

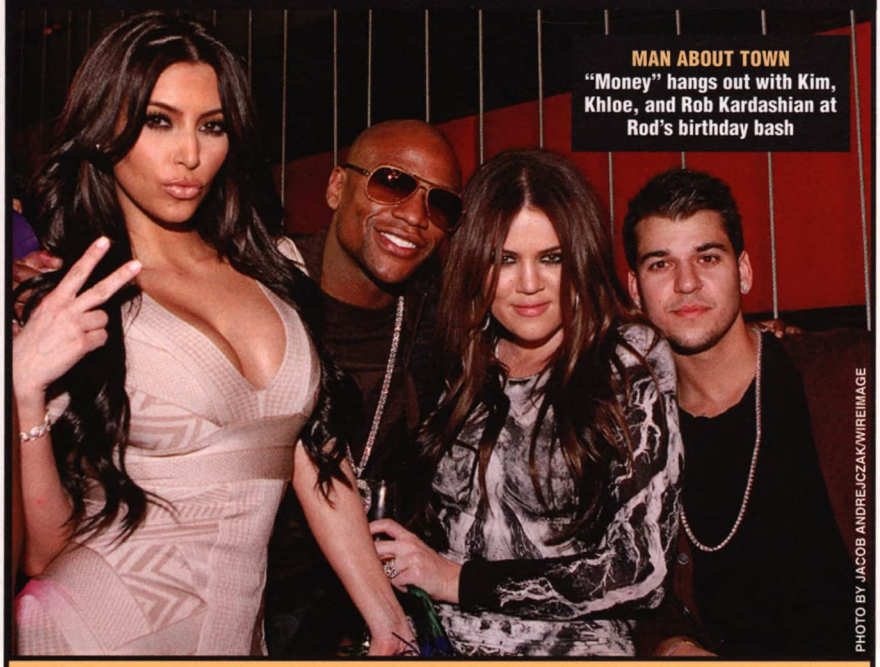
Isn't it interesting that fighters who try to knock each others' blocks off inside the ring can coexist as gentlemen outside the ropes while these front-office people are unable to conduct themselves like adults? In the case of Donaire, Arum contends the "Filipino Flash" is still tied to him, while Golden Boy and its CEO Richard Schaefer maintain Donaire is now part of their stable. Boy, will lawyers love this.

But there's a way to sort it all out quick and sweet. It is called binding arbitration. First, the two sides guarantee they will abide by the eventual ruling or pay a horrendous penalty. Then each side picks an arbitrator, and the two of them select a third arbitrator who's trusted by both. They put all grievances on the table—not just Donaire—everything. They swallow the results, and the world continues to turn, minus some of the ridiculousness. The fans get better fights, and both promoters end up earning a lot more revenue because they stepped back and let grown-ups handle their playground affairs.

On the plus side, the ramping up of hostilities between Top Rank and Golden Boy seems to have ended the war between Top Rank and Don King, at least for now. In fact, Arum and King aimed much of their Miguel Cotto-versus-Ricardo Mayorga marketing campaign around the fact that the two promoters were pals again after years of acrimony. Somehow the two 78-year-old codgers spouting malarkey side-by-side during their traveling medicine show managed to pull fans into the tent to see a pay-per-view clash between a non-English-speaking over-the-hill maniac and Cotto, who apparently stepped out for a soft drink while they were handing out charisma.

More astonishing, the fight lived up to its billing. Mayorga sustained his customary fury for 11½ rounds, and Cotto's deadly, measured attack was a masterful boxing symphony. But I wonder whether King and Nicaraguan dictator and shakedown artist Daniel Ortega left Mayorga with enough change to cover carfare back to Managua.

BUSY FLOYD?



MAN ABOUT TOWN
"Money" hangs out with Kim, Khloe, and Rob Kardashian at Rod's birthday bash

PHOTO BY JACOB ANDRZEJCZAK/WIREIMAGE

"Calendars are very difficult for someone who is as busy as Mr. Mayweather is." That's what Floyd Mayweather's attorney Karen Winckler told the *Las Vegas Sun* after she and the prosecutor agreed to delay his next criminal court hearing for a full seven weeks.

Apparently no one thought to ask Ms. Winckler precisely what her client was so busy doing. He has no job, no scheduled fights, and, thanks to his periodic brushes with the law, no endorsement commercials to shoot. Maybe he and Hollywood fruitcake Mel Gibson were putting together a joint seminar on how to handle girlfriends with tact and sensitivity.

Mayweather faces a pack of charges related to a September 2010 incident involving his ex-girlfriend. He was also charged with battery in a separate case involving a security guard employed by his home association. Fortunately for Gibson, he's a friend of the local sheriff. Unfortunately for Mayweather, he isn't.

The generally reliable Agency France Presse said Mayweather's attorneys sought this latest delay. When their case is solid, lawyers are apt to go straight for the jugular. When it looks shaky, they're likely to stall and hope for a miracle.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

WORTH FIGHTING OVER
Donaire's attempted jump to Golden Boy intensified the Top Rank-Golden Boy feud

Winning The Hard Way

Like Mayorga and the late Diego Corrales, lightweight Brandon Rios was fortunate to stumble into a profession that, given the right circumstances, can be very rewarding to lunatics. And thanks to his maniacal mindset, he failed to recognize the futility of trying to defeat quick, slick, and steady Miguel Acosta, even after absorbing those first few rounds of relentless punishment. So he stayed with it even after breaking his hand, apparently in the eighth round, turning the tables in an exciting 10th-round finish.

In a remarkably similar contest in 1991, James Toney, at age 22, came out of nowhere to stop IBF middleweight champion Michael Nunn in the 11th round after getting the worst of it all night. It was only later that Toney would win his reputation as a cunning competitor who could pile on offense without getting hit himself.

Mayorga is almost certainly too old to change, but Rios isn't necessarily doomed to always take a lot of punches in order to get his shots in. At 24, he's young enough to adjust his style. I don't predict he'll be another Toney, but it's too early to rule it out either.

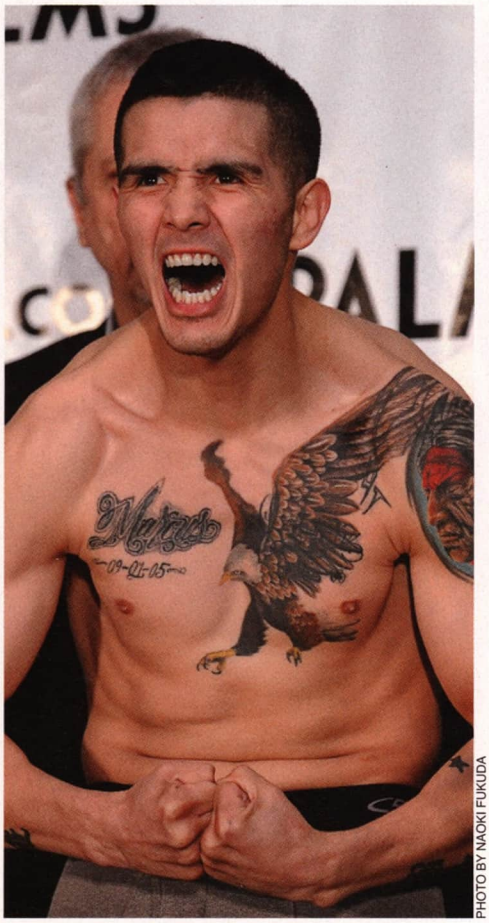


PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

MANIACAL MINDSET
Tough start against Acosta failed to deter Rios

MAGOO CITY

Magoo One

Recruiting brave welterweight Matthew Hatton from England to absorb 12 rounds of punishment in California so the much larger Saul "Canelo" Alvarez could be coroneted by the WBC was a hideous transoceanic scheme to mug a welterweight and call it a super welter title fight. The title came courtesy of Jose Sulaiman, who captains the Mexico City-based WBC with all the tact and decency of Libya's Moammar Khadafy. Alvarez "was just too big in there tonight," reflected Hatton. Exactly. None of this, by the way, can be blamed on Alvarez, a 20-year-old kid it's just about impossible to dislike.

Magoo Two

First, credit to Zab Judah for providing more evidence that he's once again a force in the junior welterweight division. Lots of trainers tell their fighters not to go for the kayo and it will come naturally. That's precisely what Judah did, breaking down Kaiser Mabuza and finishing him in round seven with one quick left. After Mabuza wobbled to his feet glassy-eyed and confused, referee and Magoo recipient Samuel Viruet was oh so wrong to let him take several more punches before stopping it.

Magoo Three

Judge Tony Crebs' obscene, lopsided, and Magoo-winning 99-91 score for Adrien Broner, who prevailed on all three scorecards over Daniel Ponce De Leon, was chilling evidence that something was rotten in Anaheim, California. Harold Lederman and the

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

ONE-SIDED AFFAIR
Even with his eyes closed, Alvarez couldn't miss Hatton

White Boy Follies

A series on the FX channel, *Lights Out*, features a central character who's a recent heavyweight champion and also a white American. Have I got a problem with that? Yes. It's like asking us to see nothing remarkable about somebody driving around a modern city in a horse and chariot. The last white American heavyweight champion was Rocky Marciano, who retired 55 years ago during Dwight Eisenhower's first term as president.

I watched the first *Lights Out* episode long enough to view the scene in which my friend Steve Farhood, a TV boxing analyst out of Brooklyn, gave viewers an Emmy-class performance playing a character named Steve who is a TV boxing analyst out

TOO MANY PUNCHES
Did Cortez allow Acosta to take unnecessary punishment?

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

crowd, who saw it for Ponce De Leon, probably had it right. The slower but steady Ponce De Leon took it to the flashy young Broner much like the tortoise conquered the lazy, overconfident hare.

Magoo Four

Joe Cortez: When Rios stopped Miguel Acosta, he got in five additional punches on an already unconscious opponent. By the time Cortez got in there and stopped it, one of Acosta's handlers, intending to halt it himself, had made it to the top step, which should have been impossible. Fair and firm is fine, but fast is also required.

Magoo Five

To the New York State Legislature. Cage fighting, which somehow manages to be dull and savage at the same time, remains illegal in the significant bastion of New York. That's wrong. I don't get out to New York as much as I'd like to, but I guarantee you its got bootleg shows, as we did in California. When we legalized them, they got regulated, taxed, and safer. And those MMA shows I personally dislike provide legitimate employment not just to the fighters, but also to a small army of ticket takers, vendors. and other employees. Last I looked, Madison Square Garden wasn't booked every night.

of Brooklyn. He could have fooled anybody. But shortly after that early scene, I found myself losing interest in a story that seemed needlessly far-fetched. Hiring a white guy to play the lead was like hiring Charlie Sheen to portray a Nobel Laureate. Just doesn't fit.

Incidentally, *The Fighter*, which came out around the same time as "Lights Out," is an entirely separate brand of bleach because it was about the very real Micky Ward and his brother Dicky Eklund, who deserved a spotlight on their remarkable lives and got it in a classy film that was engrossing, enjoyable, and pretty realistic.

Futch

Max Kellerman, who recently earned a Magoo on another matter, escapes the doghouse and lifts himself into the sunshine for daring to describe HBO's policy of paying attention to the alphabet titles as "unfortunate." It happened during a *Boxing After Dark* show. ■

Ivan Goldman can be reached at ivangoldman@yahoo.com

CAMERA CLICKS

1. STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES
Roses are red, violets are blue, you can offer Miguel Cotto flowers, he'll still kayo you. While Ricardo Mayorga's shtick has mostly grown tiresome by now, isn't there something endlessly entertaining about watching Cotto in Buckingham-Palace-Guard mode, refusing to break into a smile under any circumstances? He just needs to borrow Don King's hair, so it'll look like he's wearing a Palace Guard's hat.

2. SO THAT'S WHY THEY CALL HIM "THE FILIPINO FLASH"!
We don't know how good a photographer Nonito Donaire is, but we're going to guess he possesses the fastest shutter speed of anyone at ringside. And if his recent in-ring performances are any indication, Donaire has exceptional focus.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

3. 479½ COMBINED POUNDS OF FLOPPING FEMININITY
Remember when Bob Arum used to load every undercard with Mia St. John and Butterbean? In Sonya Lamanokis, it appears Lou DiBella has found both his Mia St. John and his Butterbean. (And in Tanzee Daniels, pictured absorbing a flush left hook, he's found his Shirley Hemphill.) In an entertaining fight on the Sergio Martinez-Sergiy Dzinziruk card at Foxwoods, Lamanokis pounded out a six-round unanimous decision to advance her record to 5-0.

4. BIRD'S-EYE BURNS
This is a pretty cool angle for photography—the only angle that lets you see the tattoos on a guy's chest and back at the same time. The ink in question belongs to junior lightweight beltholder Ricky Burns of Scotland, who recently invited the fans and press (and apparently the Goodyear blimp) for a public workout.

5. THAT'S A STRETCH
This doesn't look like the most effective technique for moving chairs, but what do we know? Before he can hit the dance floor, Sugar Ray Leonard has to limber up with *Dancing With The Stars* partner Anna Trebunskaya (who, from the looks of this photo, has earned the right to remove the "Tre" and the "kaya" from her name). It will be interesting to see how Sugar Ray does on the hit ABC show, since, as Marvin Hagler can attest, Leonard has always had a knack for impressing the judges.

3

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

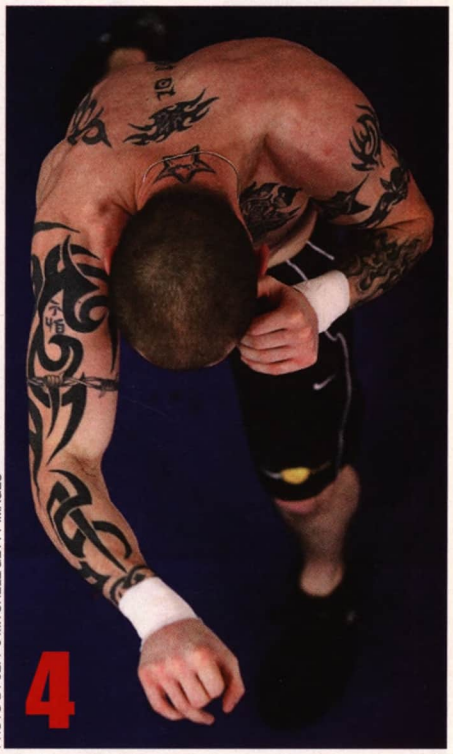


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PHOTO BY JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

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PHOTO BY GREG ZABILSKI/ABC VIA GETTY IMAGES

AT THE FIGHTS

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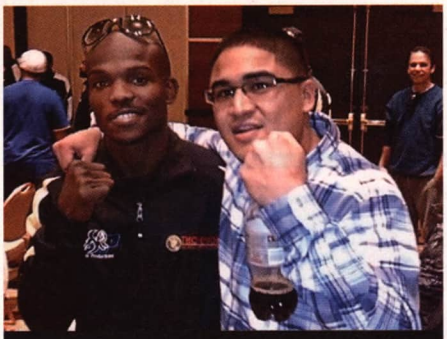
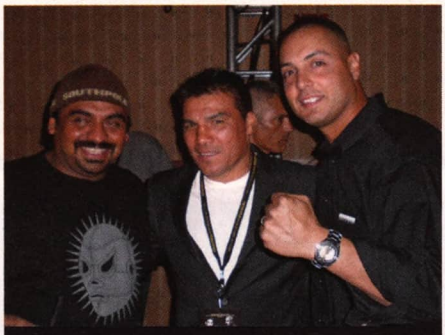
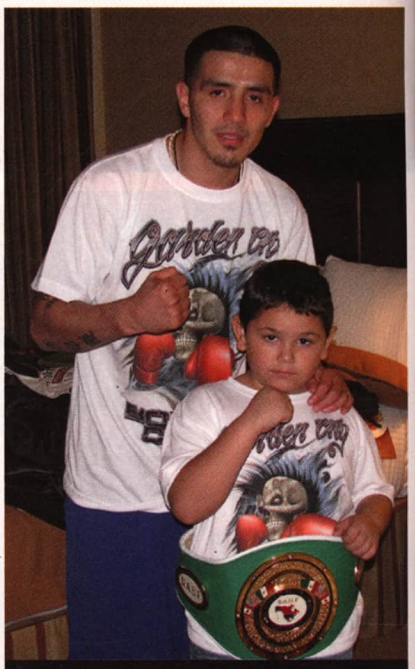


Timothy Bradley, with Tim Gallegos, at the Bradley-Peterson weigh-in



Carlos Baldomir, with Raymond Muro Jr. and Aniceto Escobar, at Pechanga Casino

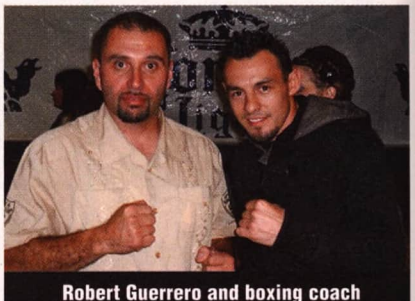


Brandon Rios and Donovin Aldana prior to Rios-Lowther

Joshua Clottey, with Mitch Clemente, at Lopez-Mtagwa

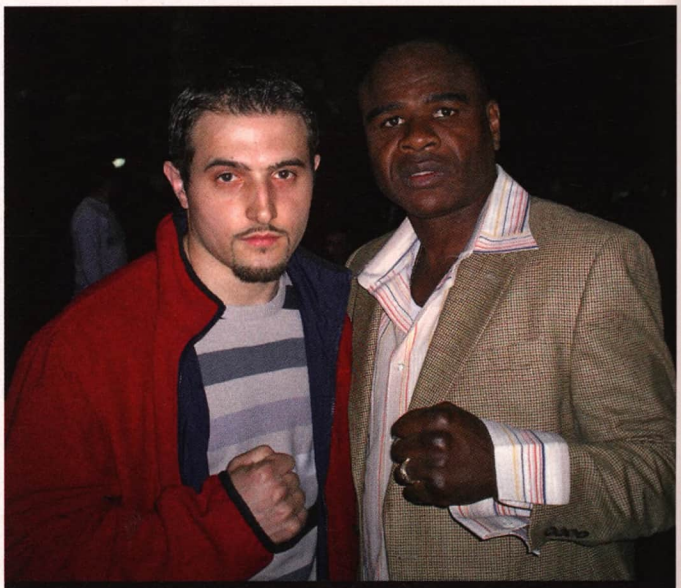
Vitali Klitschko and THE RING at training camp

Freddie Roach, with Patrick Cachaper, at Wild Card Boxing Club



Robert Guerrero and boxing coach Steve Salas at "Knocking Out Cancer" event in San Francisco

Azumah Nelson and Juan Aldana Jr. at Pacquiao-Margarito



Glen Johnson and Ioan Cristian Popa at Dianconu-Henry

The RING

CARD GIRL OF THE MONTH

Janice Kakish

Tale of the Tape

Height: 5'4"
Weight: 110
Measurements: 34-25-36
Stance: Orthodox
Reach: 26"
Favorite Fighter: Manny Pacquiao
Hometown: Pasadena, CA
Current Location: Los Angeles, CA
Where you've seen her: *Entourage* (HBO), Spokesmodel for Total Energy Workout, music videos for Jay-Z and Silk.

PHOTO BY THE PRIVATE COLLECTION

PHOTO BY RYAN DWYER

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To Book Janice Please contact her agency Ragaza LC Models at www.ragazalcmodels.com, www.ragazas.net, lcmodel@gmail.com, or (818) 679-8766.

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SERGIO MARTINEZ

A Champion Trapped By His Own Success

By Joseph Santoliquito • Photos by Marty Rosentgarten

It's four o'clock in the morning, and the alarm clock rings awaking Sergio Martinez for another morning run. It takes him away from the same recurring dream, the one in which he's bending and dipping, hands down by his sides, as he leans in trying to catch the bouncing Filipino staring back at him with the razor-sharp eyes before an immense throng in Argentina. It's a dream he's obsessed with, a moment he's worked toward his whole career.

It's the dream of becoming the best by facing the world's best pound-for-pound fighter—Manny Pacquiao. Unfortunately, it's a vision that may never be fulfilled by the middleweight world champion. It's not that the 36-year-old "Maravilla" doesn't deserve the chance. It's just the position in which Martinez finds himself today—one of today's pound-for-pound fighters, trapped by his own success.

Martinez is empowered once again by yet another scintillating performance. He dispensed of Sergiy Dzinziruk rather easily in his second world championship defense, stopping the previously undefeated junior middleweight southpaw in eight rounds at the MGM Grand Foxwoods, in Mashantucket, Connecticut, knocking "Razor" down five times in the process.

Martinez took a new approach to reach the conclusion, outjabbing the jabber and turning what many feared, going in, would be a boring tactical display into an exciting, emphatic victory.

But where does Martinez go from here? How does he continue to build his brand on fan-friendly fights in an environment where the world's best are fighting either shopworn leftovers or not fighting at all?

At the moment, there is such a dearth of talent at 160 that Martinez doesn't have a marquee fight on the horizon. He wants Pacquiao, and he talks about facing Floyd Mayweather. But realistically, it's very doubtful either fight will happen. He's much larger than the two, and who's to say that after he smashed Paul Williams with one of the greatest one-punch knockouts in recent history and dismantled Dzinziruk that either fighter's promoter would want his guy to get within a Grand Canyon's distance of him?

Martinez has evolved from poverty-encased beginnings, where he didn't know the meaning of "dinner," to million-dollar paydays. Now that he's arrived, there's no upward direction in which to go.

Still, Martinez keeps his beaming optimism untarnished.

"I know what the reality is, but I've always been one of those guys that thinks anything is possible in this world," Martinez said, through Cicilio Flores, his conditioning coach. "All you need to do is look at my career to know that anything is possible. I want to fight the best, and Pacquiao and Mayweather are the two guys that are above me. Those are the guys I have to beat to become number one. It's important for me to be number one. Think about it, it's a great fight for the fans and the boxing community.

"It's something I've dreamed and thought about all my life. I'm going to do everything in my power to make a Pacquiao fight happen. I'm doing all the work I have to do outside the ring to make it happen. I really think we can sit down at the table and work it out because there is nothing more that I feel I have to do. I know boxing is far from perfect and not every fight that deserves to be made gets made. So if neither Pacquiao nor Mayweather want to fight me, make me number one and have everyone come after me. I can deal with that. I actually feel sorry for Pacquiao and Mayweather because I'm the one coming after them."

ON BENDED KNEES
Martinez walks to a neutral corner after knocking down Dzinziruk. What many figured would be a close, boring fight turned out to be an exciting punch-filled contest that was dominated by the champion.

In the meantime, while Martinez calls out Pacquiao and Mayweather, a pretty lengthy line is forming behind him. But who really deserves to fight him?

At middleweight, Felix Sturm, THE RING's number-one contender, fights almost exclusively in Germany. Sturm gained some positive attention after he fought Oscar De La Hoya (L 12) in June 2004, but he quickly lost his stateside luster by moving back to Europe and locking himself into Germany. There's Sebastian Sylvester, another German middleweight, who lost to Sturm and seems, like Sturm, to be content on fighting limited opponents.

Another possibility is Russian Dmitry Pirog, who caught everyone's attention when he splattered Daniel Jacobs in July 2010 on the undercard of the Juan Manuel Marquez-Juan Diaz rematch. But Martinez quickly dismisses that possibility, shelving it at least for a year.

"Let Pirog beat Paul Williams, Kelly Pavlik, or any of the guys I've had to face to get here," Martinez said. "I don't have what you would say is a B-list of opponents whatsoever, and, if I can't find no one to fight, I'd have to talk to my managers. But Pirog has to work his way up like I did. I'm not interested in that fight. If he fought all the guys I fought, I might think about it. He hasn't."

Junior middleweight action-fighter Alfredo Angulo priced himself out of a Martinez fight. He still could be a possibility, maybe with the fight in Mexico since Angulo faces visa issues.

Another viable option could be number-one junior middleweight contender Miguel Cotto, who's shown a penchant to step in with anyone (though he gives away three inches in height to the 5'10" Martinez), but the way Top Rank promoter Bob Arum is staying with his in-house policy these days, it looks like Cotto will be facing Antonio Margarito in a low-risk rematch.

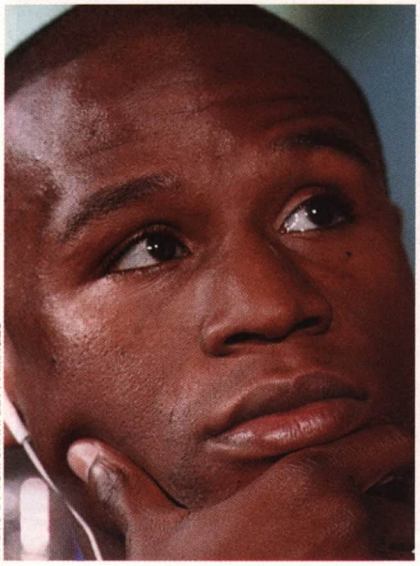
DOWN AGAIN!
All told, the previously undefeated Dzinziruk was floored five times before the fight was stopped in the eighth round. To his credit, the challenger kept getting up and fighting back but simply couldn't handle Martinez' speed and punch.

Everyone in boxing wants to see Martinez again, but against whom? That's the predicament he finds himself in.

"Sergio is in a real tough spot, and it's a shame because we see this all the time in boxing: If you are seemingly unbeatable and don't have a big fan following with big economic clout, there is nothing to be gained by fighting Sergio Martinez," said HBO blow-by-blow man Jim Lampley. "Whoever fights him is going to get a loss and lose to someone the public doesn't know as well as they should. In Martinez' case, he never got the chance to build on his star coming up like Mayweather. He has to strike now."

Martinez reminds Lampley of someone—a fighter with a great backstory filled with abject poverty, an early career laboring in obscurity, who was never weighed down by bitterness or rancor over their station. Yes, Martinez' emergence reminds Lampley of Pacquiao. They're both offensive fighters who gun for a

DREAM ON
Martinez, who wants to be number-one pound-for-pound, has fantasized about fighting either Mayweather (left) or Pacquaio (right), but getting them into the ring will prove highly problematical.



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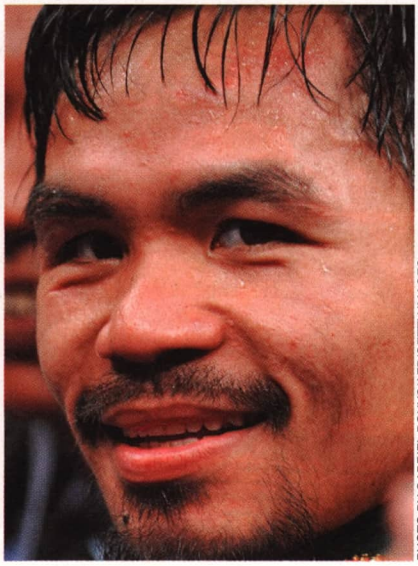

PHOTO BY GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

PATIENCE PAYS

Sergio Martinez just shook his head. He wore a huge grin on his face as if to imply "I won, but I wasn't too pleased with how I won." The Argentinian, by way of Spain, vanquished what was supposed to be a tough foe in Sergiy Dzinziruk, 158, a southpaw who possessed a wicked jab and excellent boxing skills. But it was Martinez, 47-2-2 (26), beating his challenger with an accurate, knifing jab that set the tone of the fight.

It was just a little odd watching the crouching, 5'10" Martinez, 158, dip and sway and catch the six-foot Dzinziruk, Kiev, Ukrainian, coming forward. It was an energy-expending style, but effective, causing Dzinziruk to be uncertain what to do.

"It might have looked easy, but, no, it wasn't that easy," admitted Martinez. "It was more difficult in the sense that Dzinziruk was a very smart and intelligent fighter. It was a chess match. I never fought a fighter like that before. This guy was a little tough to figure out. I needed to coax him forward and engage me. My intentions were to make him fight. He was a great counter puncher. That was part of the strategy. I had to be faster than he was in order to beat him at his game."

After winning the first three rounds, the 36-year-old Martinez put an exclamation point on it scoring the first of five knockdowns—and sinking Dzinziruk, 36-1 (24), to the canvas for the first time in his career in the fourth round. Martinez caught Dzinziruk, 35, off-balance, and the Ukrainian touched his glove and knee down, causing referee Arthur Mercante Jr. to call it a knockdown.

Martinez scored the second knockdown in the fifth, landing a gorgeous short left to the side of Dzinziruk's head. This seemed to shake a sense of urgency into Dzinziruk, who came back and had his best two rounds in the sixth and seventh, working the jab and opening a cut on Martinez' left eyelid.

That forced Martinez to ratchet up his intensity in the eighth round. About a minute in, Martinez landed a left that crashed Dzinziruk to the canvas a third time, and, moments later, Maravilla scored his fourth knockdown. Finally, Martinez bounced a combination off Dzinziruk's head for the fifth knockdown, forcing Mercante to finally wave it off at 1:43 of the eighth round.

"I got hit more than I should have," Martinez said. "I had to be more patient and calm. Dzinziruk's counter punching was forcing me to get hit more. My timing was a little off. Once I started to be patient, everything all came together. I felt I was forcing him to fight too fast. I'm working on being the best that I can be, and I'd say right now I can't put a finger on how close I am to where I want to be. But I can be better."

—J. S.

EARMUFFS TIME
Dzinziruk covers up the best he can

knockout, a rarity today among the pound-for-pound elite. Martinez' one missing piece is the star-studded cast Pacquiao fought when he was building his stature as a featherweight and junior lightweight against the likes of Erik Morales, Marco Antonio Barrera, and Juan Manuel Marquez.

Patience could pay dividends for Martinez. Marvin Hagler waited his turn for large paydays in the mid-1980s when Thomas Hearns, Roberto Duran, John Mugabi, and

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BEAK BENDER
Martinez' accuracy is a major part of his game, as is clearly illustrated by this right hand that is landing flush on Dzinziruk's nose.

Sugar Ray Leonard became middleweights. Presently, no marketable, competitive middleweight exists for Martinez. The opponent must be built.

Max Kellerman, HBO's color analyst, advocates James Kirkland, the ex-con who was recently released and is still reassembling his once-promising career. But it's going to take some time.

"There's always someone out there," Kellerman said. "That guy could be James Kirkland. I think 12 months from now Kirkland would be a great opponent for Martinez. Given Kirkland's style, he's the kind of guy who's comfortable chasing a guy around and he's good at it. Kirkland has next-level toughness and determination. He comes right at guys and gives me that sense that he's comfortable chasing you and beating you up. Kirkland told me that he wants Martinez. I told him that Martinez is a tough style for him. But he told me he'd hit him everywhere, his elbows, arms, and shoulders. He wants Martinez. Who else is calling this guy out? No one. Kirkland has the desire to be a star. If Kirkland can stay out of trouble, his is one of the most fan-friendly names in boxing."

CROUCHING TARGET
It didn't matter what the highly skilled Dzinziruk did, Martinez had little trouble hitting him. The fact that "Maravilla" got off first in most rounds was a major factor in being able to outjab the jabber.

After facing Kermit Cintron, Paul Williams twice, Kelly Pavlik, and the world-class Dzinziruk, Martinez is entitled to have an easy showcase fight at the end of the year, possibly against comebacking Peter Manfredo, maybe back in Foxwoods, where it could draw big numbers, since Manfredo is New England based. Moreover, since Manfredo is promoted by Lou DiBella, who also promotes Martinez, it wouldn't be a tough match to make.

For now, Martinez is left to dream of fights he'd like to see happen. Those dreams have been fulfilled in the past, so who's to say they won't again.

"I still have a lot to do," Martinez vowed. "You get to the top, and you expect more. It can be frustrating, that's absolutely true. It's taken me so long to get here, and, since I've been here, I think I can do even better than I did in 2010. I have to turn things around. I have to keep dreaming." ■

SAUL "CANEL
The Last Of Los

By Norm Frauenheim

Freckles and red hair are a good introduction, a better marketing hook and an irresistible temptation to search for comparisons. But Saul Alvarez never wanted to be Opie or Howdy Doody. Lucille Ball's place among history's great redheads is safe. Alvarez only wants to become a great fighter. If that means a different look, he'd grab a razor and go bald or reach for the dye and go green.

By birth, he's a redhead, all right, complete with a nickname, "Canelo," which is Spanish for cinnamon and a promotional ingredient in a recipe for impossible expectations. But be careful, very careful, not to overindulge. Too much of the sweet stuff could ferment into a turnoff or flameout in a profession also with a taste for red, blood red.

Alvarez' confrontation with expectation has arrived, faster than expected perhaps, yet inevitable in the 20-year old's swift emergence and Pied Piper-like ability to generate business, first in Mexico and now the United States.

He has a growing fan base, his first title belt (the WBC's version of the 154-pound title), and HBO-reported an audience of 1.4 million for a March 5 decision over Matthew Hatton in front of an announced crowd of 11,674 at the Honda Center in Anaheim, California.

The numbers have been multiplying into a buzz for at least a year. Where there's talk, there's argument, and there's plenty of both about the merits and potential of a fighter who went from redheaded teenager to prospect to titleholder in about the time it takes to skip a flat stone across boxing's shrinking pond.

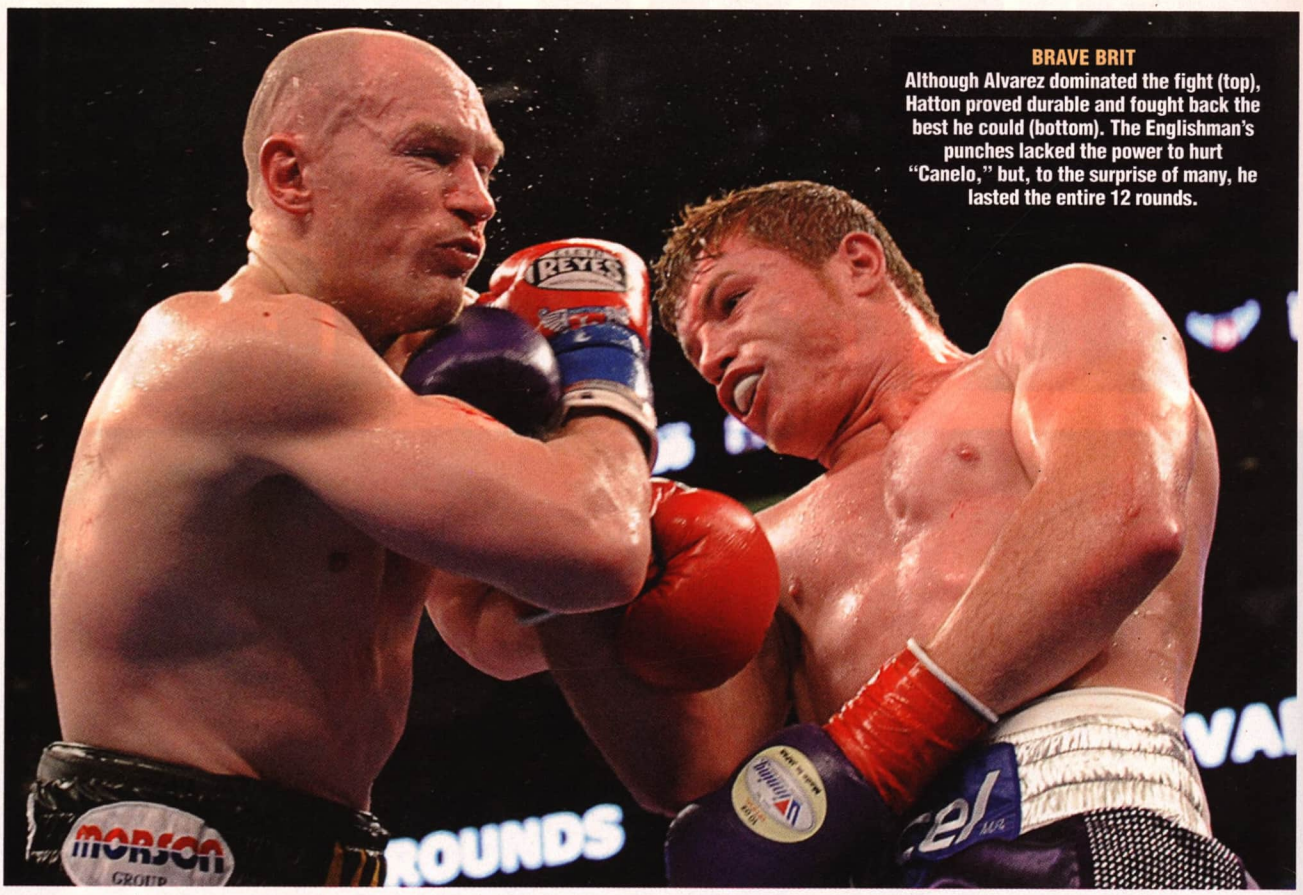
It's all happened much too fast for some of the faithful in the old-school congregation that foresees peril in every due not paid and every fundamental not learned.

But it's not been fast enough for those who worry about a sport in need of a quick infusion of youthful star power and charisma.

HBO's Larry Merchant looks at Alvarez and sees a prodigy. Merchant compared him to a point guard or quarterback who is the son of a coach. The skills are in the DNA, inherited and instinctive.

O'' ALVAREZ
Son Patricios?

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA



BRAVE BRIT
Although Alvarez dominated the fight (top), Hatton proved durable and fought back the best he could (bottom). The Englishman's punches lacked the power to hurt "Canelo," but, to the surprise of many, he lasted the entire 12 rounds.

PHOTOS BY NAOKI FUKUDA

"Amid all the attention on his hair, there is unmistakable flint above and beneath the freckles that have attracted so much attention. He has the dark, stubborn eyes of the Mexican legend he hopes to succeed. Look into them and you see Julio Cesar Chavez staring back at you. Blink at your own peril."

"Sometimes, somebody with more athletic ability surpasses him," Merchant said. "We'll see."

The old-school crowd thinks it already has seen too much. Juan Manuel Marquez ripped Alvarez for a lack of professional discipline in his failure to step on the official scale at 150 pounds, a controversial catch weight, for his bout with Hatton. Marquez complained loudly to the Mexican media that Alvarez showed he didn't have the serious stuff needed to be a true champion.

"You train to lose weight," said Marquez, the best active fighter in Mexico today and THE RING lightweight champion, yet one who has probably paid more dues than sold tickets in his Hall of Fame career. "Your first opponent is the scale. You have to beat the weight and then have a strategy to beat your foe. But he failed big time after so much hype. This is unacceptable, irresponsible."

Marquez went on to say that Alvarez is trying to fool the public. If so, the public enjoys playing the fool.

Nothing has deterred fans from getting in line to see Alvarez in numbers that, if accurate, are astonishing, especially in Mexico. Mexican media reported that the Televisa rating for his one-sided decision over Hatton was 25, which translates into 15 million households. And you thought Justin Bieber was popular.

Alvarez' inability to stop the smaller Hatton only seemed to fuel criticism of the youngest fighter to win a major title since Mike Tyson.

Golden Boy Promotions consultant Don Chargin warned that Hatton would be difficult. Chargin said Hatton, who has more of a chin than Ricky and none of his brother's fame, was underrated and tough enough to be stopped only once in 40 fights. Alvarez couldn't make it twice in 41.

"Matthew Hatton is a survivor," said Chargin, who helps Golden Boy matchmaker Eric Gomez select Alvarez' opponents.

Still, it looked as if Alvarez was poised to end it early. He had a bloodied Hatton reeling against the ropes in the second round. But Alvarez appeared to back off in the fifth. There was immediate speculation on the Internet and later the next day in the morning newspapers about whether his conditioning was less than optimal.

A learning experience, Golden Boy president Oscar De La Hoya said.

"The only thing he wants to mention is that he had a couple of distractions in camp," De La Hoya said in a translation of Alvarez' Spanish at the postfight news conference at the Honda Center. "But being 20 years old, I found out it can be a distraction when people are trying to sue you, trying to get into your personal life, and really do bad things. It's a learning process."

Neither Alvarez nor De la Hoya was specific about the nature of the distractions. But there were two possibilities, one right after another in late January.

On January 24, Marisol Gonzalez, a Mexican beauty queen and sportscaster, announced that she and Alvarez had split. They had planned to marry. But the engagement was off, Gonzalez said.

Two days later on January 26, promoter Felix "Tutu" Zubala's All-Star Boxing filed suit against Alvarez and Golden Boy in

FAN FAVORITE

Alavrez has been attracting attention since he was a little boy working in his mother's restaurant. Today, he is mobbed by admirers whenever he makes a personal appearance, such as this autograph session in Los Angeles.

PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

Miami-Dade County Circuit Court, alleging that Alvarez breached a four-year agreement and that Golden Boy interfered with a binding contract.

According to the lawsuit, Alvarez signed with the south Florida promoter in September of 2008. He fought for All-Star nine times and collected $180,000, Zubala alleges. Alvarez' victory over Hatton was his sixth bout under the Golden Boy banner.

It was enough to put some jaded gray into that 20-year old's innocent red hair. It

HATTON HAMMERED
Alvarez jolts his foe with a left uppercut, but he could not put Hatton on the floor despite landing 294 punches, according to CompuBox. As he also failed to make weight, some critics are questioning Canelo's work ethic.

didn't, although it might have been enough for a young fighter to stray from training and a diet. He was 1.8 pounds too heavy on the day before opening bell.

The quick succession, split and suit, also could have distracted him just enough to fall short of expectations on the night of the 12-round fight against Hatton. Surely, it was a double-edged lesson in what De La Hoya has called a learning process.

In De La Hoya, Alvarez has a mentor whose own experience can help shepherd

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

him through the extracurricular rounds of the tabloid twitter that is as common outside the ropes as low blows are within them.

De La Hoya sees some of his former self, a wayward past, in the way that Alvarez attracts a crowd populated by fans ordinarily ambivalent about boxing. Alvarez has rock star-like charisma, which also means groupies and all-night parties. De La Hoya said he couldn't resist when he was a young fighter ticketed for big stardom and bigger money.

"It shed four years off of my career" De La Hoya said as he sat alongside Alvarez during a media round table in Las Vegas before Amir Khan survived a withering 10th-round assault for a gritty decision over Marcos Maidana.

Those are four years that De La Hoya hopes Alvarez won't squander. Perhaps because of the boss' experience, a vigilant Golden Boy is wary of temptations that derail a promising career as easily as an unseen punch.

Chargin recalls Mando Ramos, who in the 1960s used a forged birth certificate as a 17-year-old so he could turn pro in Los Angeles. The talented Ramos went on to win the lightweight title. But he was finished—hung-over, shot, and out of boxing—when he was 24.

"He just couldn't behave," Chargin said.

The well-worn examples, good and bad, are there for Alvarez to follow, avoid, or just ignore.

"I've always been very disciplined," Alvarez said in a tone that suggests he has his own path in mind.

Amid all the attention on his hair, there is unmistakable flint above and beneath the freckles that have attracted so much attention. He has the dark, stubborn eyes of the Mexican legend he hopes to succeed. Look into them and you see Julio Cesar Chavez staring back at you. Blink at your own peril.

It's impossible to say whether the eye of a tiger will offset apparent weaknesses, including an evident lack of foot and hand speed. If hard eyes in fact hint at the defiant stubborn streak that so often separates the good from great, however, it was there in an angry flash against Hatton in the seventh round.

Alvarez was penalized a point for hitting after the break. But take a second look. Alvarez was retaliating for a Hatton blow behind the head that was never seen by referee Lou Moret. If a fighter doesn't retaliate, he might as well be Howdy Doody.

It might be that tough edge that completes the Canelo charisma, one that will continue to play out on June 18 in a bout that Golden Boy CEO Richard Schaefer says is scheduled for a rodeo arena near Guadalajara on a ranch owned by popular Mexican singer Vicente Fernandez.

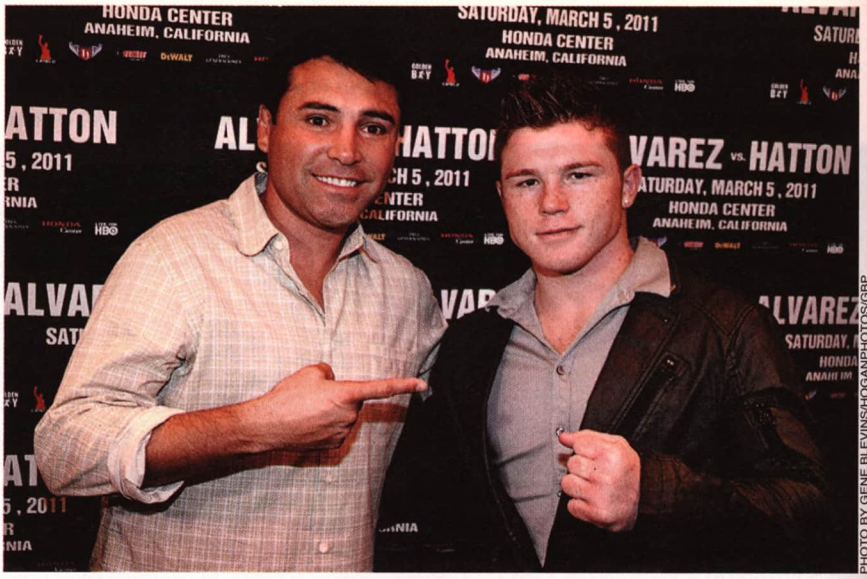


PHOTO BY GENE BLEVINS/HOGANPHOTOS/GBP

OSCAR'S NEW CASH COW

De La Hoya is delighted to be promoting Alvarez and thinks he can help him avoid some of the pitfalls "The Golden Boy" encountered as a young star.

Then, there's September 17. Schaefer, who asks that critics have patience and remember that Alvarez is still only 20, says Golden Boy has put a hold on Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles in anticipation of an Alvarez fight that will be the centerpiece of the annual celebration of Mexican Independence.

No matter when or where, fans figure to follow, maybe because they see the toughness in Alvarez as clearly as that red hair. Like so much else around him, Alvarez appears unfazed by all the mounting attention. He acts as if he is used to it. In fact, his childhood was a rehearsal that prepared him for today's gathering crowd.

Mexican sportswriter Hesiquio Baldera of Oaxaca has been watching Alvarez since the junior middleweight was a kid running around his mom's eatery near Guadalajara.

"He is a different looking Mexican," Baldera said in an e-mail. "Even in the north [where] there are a lot of white people, Saul's red hair is unheard of. That gives him a unique connection with the people.

"For instance, I was told this story by his team members: When he was little, his mother had a little fonda [sort of a small restaurant] where she sold Mexican food. The customers would only go to eat there to see this little redheaded kid. They were passionate about the little boy even before he was known.

"Another story is that when he was fighting as an amateur. He had only a few fights in that category. The crowd would chant 'Go white boy' or 'Go red.'

"The affair with the crowd is something he has always had. Some say he was born with it."

Maybe, he was.

Those educated in Mexican history look at the red hair, see the freckles and think of an Army unit, a 19th-century battalion that was predominantly Irish. They were known as Los Son Patricios, or Those of St. Patrick. They fought for Mexico in the Mexican-American War from 1844 through 1848.

Many, between 50 and 85, were executed as traitors. Their Mexican comrades also called them Los Colorados for their sunburned faces, freckles, and red hair. The guess is that an Alvarez ancestor marched in their ranks.

"There might have been an Irish grandfather somewhere there in my past," said Alvarez, whose mom, Ana Maria, is the only other redhead in a family that includes seven brothers, all boxers.

If not the hair, an Irish ancestry might be in a part of the Alvarez name that is not included on billboards or on his boxing license. His full name is Santos Saul Alvarez Barragan. According to one history of the name, Barragan is the Mexican spelling of an old Irish name, Berrigen.

In Mexico, Barragan means "brave or courageous," according to several sources. If he ever hopes to fulfill all of those expectations, Canelo might need a lot more of that Barragan than cinnamon. ■

Norm Frauenheim covered boxing for* The Arizona Republic *for two decades and was the winner of the 2008 Fleischer Award.

POR LOS QUE SE ATREVEN A SUBIR AL RING

CON CARÁCTER

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COTTO AT 30

How Much Does He Have Left?

By William Dettloff
Photos by Naoki Fukuda

From the way it ended, you'd have thought Miguel Cotto had an easy night of it. His left hook caught Ricardo Mayorga with his chin up in no-man's land, where it often is, bless his heart, and landed hard enough not only to drop Mayorga but apparently to break his left hand, from the look of it (though it turned out to be a dislocated thumb). Mayorga got up, considered the seriousness of the situation, and told referee Robert Byrd he'd had enough fun for the evening, thank you very much.

Just like that, it was over, and, when Cotto raised his hands, it was over a head dotted with bright red welts and scrapes, but there were none of the deep, jagged cuts we've often seen on him after 12 rounds of hard labor. No bulbous swelling, no rivulets of blood disappearing into a landscape of tattoos below. There was no bucket of bright red water in his corner. No plasma-filled sponge. So if you saw just the end, you'd have thought Cotto had an easy night, maybe one like he had against Yuri Foreman or Michael Jennings. A little longer, but still.

However, it wasn't an easy night. Not like it should have been. Yes, the judges all had Cotto ahead 107-102 when it ended, and he didn't look like he'd been pushed face-first into the business end of a wood chipper. But he had been in a fight. And if you are the kind that worries about prizefighters and what their lives will be like after they finally quit and you saw Antonio Margarito smiling in the crowd and know Bob Arum wants

to make Cotto-Margarito II, then you are worried a little about Cotto.

Not because Margarito could beat him, although anything can happen in a fight, but because Cotto is 30 years old now, and it's not an Archie Moore 30. At 30, Moore was still in diapers in terms of what he would get done in prize rings and how much he had left. Cotto looks like what he is: a world-class athlete who very probably won't be one for very much longer, regardless of how many tattoos he gets, how many more big left hooks he has in him, or how long 40-somethings like Bernard Hopkins and Glen Johnson keep looking good.

The better fighters today are just hitting their stride at 30. Look at the ages of some of Cotto's contemporaries. Manny Pacquiao is 32. Floyd Mayweather 34, the same as Wladimir Klitschko and Steve Cunningham. Sergio Martinez is 36 and has never looked as good as he does now. Lucian Bute is 31.

Still, more than once against Mayorga, Cotto looked like an old fighter. If you want, you can blame it on genetics or style or 10 years in the ring. Or, if you're one of those who attributes all things everywhere to the brilliant wonder that is Pacquiao, you can say Pacquiao put 10 years on Cotto when he brutalized him over 12 bloody, brain-stem-loosening rounds in November 2009. Others might be inclined to grant Pacquiao a more sensible, say, 30 percent or so of the credit for Cotto's seemingly premature aging and split the balance among the wars Cotto waged with Zab Judah, Josh Clottey, Margarito, and, to a lesser degree, Shane Mosley. Whatever the case and whatever the number, Cotto is not what he used to be.

How else to explain the wild, awkward right hands Mayorga, 29-8-1 (23), was able to land frequently enough to keep things interesting and with particular effect in the fourth, seventh, and 11th rounds? How else to explain the absence of the smooth

FINAL SHOT

It was a savage left hook that decked Mayorga in the final round, leading to a TKO victory for Cotto. Most pundits thought the Puerto Rican puncher would have ended it much sooner.

NO PUSHOVER
Mayorga gave Cotto a tough time, landing enough of his own blows to keep things interesting. But even though he was in excellent condition, Mayorga just could not overcome Cotto's skills and punching power.

technical skills the 20-something Cotto once used to outbox and break down all manner of Mayorga-like tough guys such as Muhammad Abdullaev, Randall Bailey, and Kelson Pinto? And Mosley for that matter. How else to explain the anxious look that came over Cotto's face at the end of the seventh when three Mayorga right hands landed on the side of his shaved dome and put just a bit of a wobble in him?

"He hit me with some hard punches, but I always stayed on my feet," Cotto said afterward. He didn't offer how hard it was to do that or how close he was to losing that battle to stay upright. "We just stayed with the game plan we practiced [in training camp] in Miami."

It's true that Cotto, 36-2 (29), landed the better punches all night and that his jabs and right hands were the difference. Also that on the occasions when he stepped to the side and dug left hooks into Mayorga's flank, he looked just like he did against, say, Carlos Quintana or Paulie Malignaggi. You got the sense that Cotto, Caguas, Puerto Rico, was in charge for most of the fight but that it could

all change with one Mayorga right hand. And that if Mayorga, Managua, Nicaragua, had just a modicum of appreciable technical skill, Cotto would have been there for the taking. That's how it felt, watching. Just 30 years old? Really?

Emanuel Steward, who started training Cotto after the loss to Pacquiao, offered his own reasons for the occasional difficulties Mayorga presented his charge, and they had nothing to do with the wear on Cotto's tires.

"I was very satisfied with Cotto's performance," Steward said at the postfight press conference. "Mayorga was much, much tougher and better conditioned than I expected. He takes a good punch and has a very strong constitution. It's very difficult to get away from his punches sometimes because he runs at you from so many angles. But Miguel operated behind that jab and never did get into the mind games."

Steward said in the days that followed that Mayorga hadn't been in such good condition since his fights with Vernon Forrest eight years ago. Mayorga thought so too, as evidenced by his continual need to lift his shirt and show off his abdominal muscles whenever Cotto or a camera came within 30 feet of him in the days leading up to the fight.

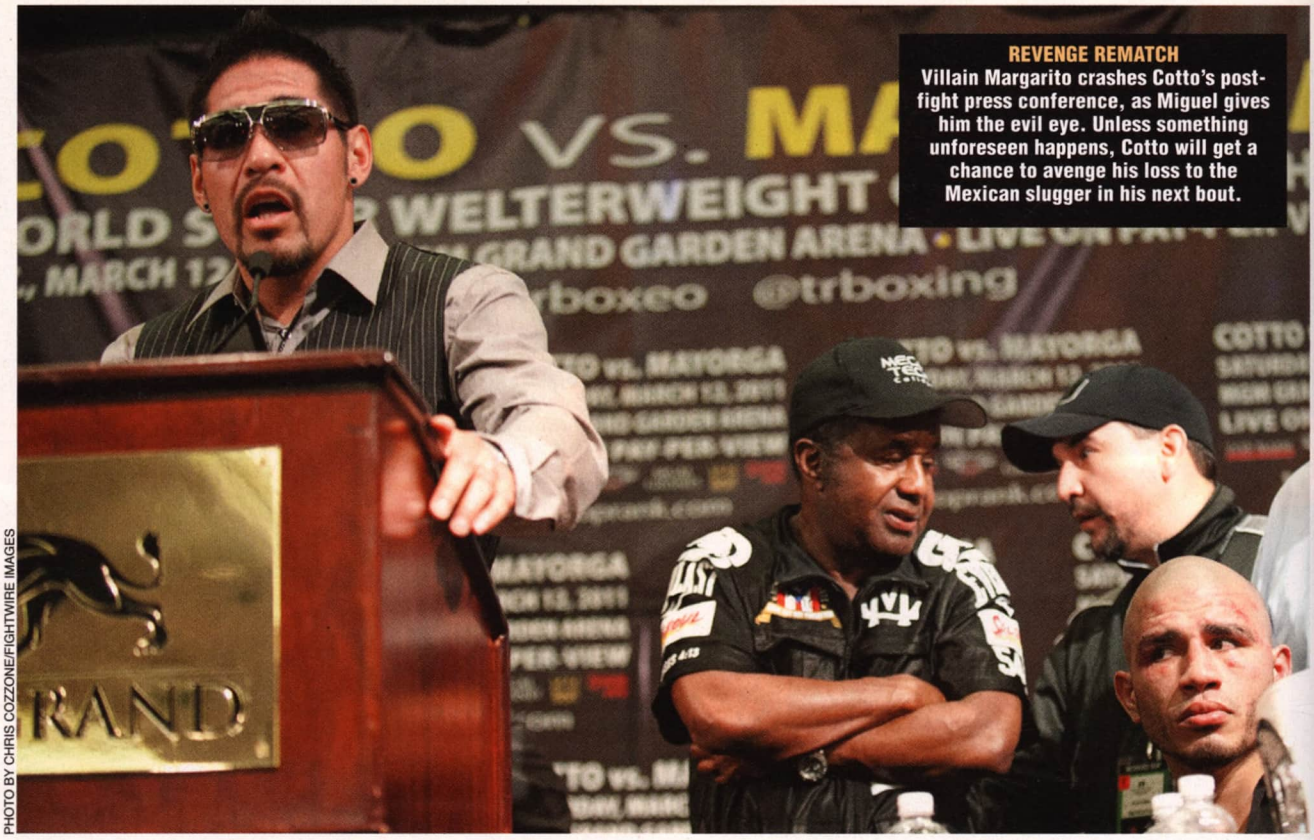
"The crowd of 7,247 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas went wild whenever he taunted Cotto, which he did quite frequently, and the dynamic offered a stark look into their respective psyches: Mayorga the reckless hothead, Cotto the cool stoic. Mayorga's Sonny Corleone to Cotto's Michael."

Mayorga may have been in shape, but it looked to us like the typical performance by the man who has become boxing's crazy uncle—the guy who shows up every other Christmas, acts like he's out of his gourd, entertains us with his vulgarity, and then, on cue, disappears until the next time. He's now provided entertaining, if not overly compelling losing performances against Felix Trinidad (KO by 8), Oscar De La Hoya (KO by 6), and Mosley (KO by 12), and, if you want, you can throw in the win over an entirely dilapidated Fernando Vargas (W 12).

As has always been the case, it was Mayorga's bravado and emotion that kept him in the fight, kept the fight entertaining, and also proved his biggest liability. The crowd of 7,247 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas went wild whenever he taunted Cotto, which he did quite frequently, and

GRINDING IT OUT
Although Mayorga was more competitive than many expected, he was gradually worn down by Cotto's steady assault and his own exertion.

KAYO NUMBER TWENTY-NINE
The ever-stoic Cotto acknowledges the cheers of the crowd at the MGM Grand as referee Robert Byrd helps groggy Mayorga back to his corner.



REVENGE REMATCH
Villain Margarito crashes Cotto's post-fight press conference, as Miguel gives him the evil eye. Unless something unforeseen happens, Cotto will get a chance to avenge his loss to the Mexican slugger in his next bout.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

the dynamic offered a stark look into their respective psyches: Mayorga the reckless hot-head, Cotto the cool stoic. Mayorga's Sonny Corleone to Cotto's Michael. And you'll see him again. Despite his comments immediately afterward that it was time for him to leave boxing and get a job, the Spanish-language news agency EFE said he told Don King to get him three more fights—two easy ones "and then I'll return against someone tough," he said.

Cotto should follow the same plan. Over the course of his decade-long career, he's faced a larger number of high-quality fighters than anyone else in the game with the possible exception of Pacquiao. And it's been that way from the start. Some day soon, people in the fight business will begin to evaluate his worthiness for Hall of Fame induction, and they would do well to remember that from all appearances he has fought everyone around his weight that was willing to face him. He is on a long list of those avoided by Floyd Mayweather, but that was never of his doing. You get the sense he would have fought Mayweather at any time over the last 10 years if given the chance.

The smart money says Cotto and Margarito will meet in June in the rematch that will have Arum's publicity guys working overtime coming up with synonyms for "revenge." It will be a blockbuster you can be sure and is evidence of the continuing good fortune our friends at Top Rank are able to manufacture. There is a soap opera-like quality about Arum's large and high-quality stable and the deals he makes among and for them, with stories ripe for exploitation and sale to the masses.

Certainly, Margarito has been a boon to him. Every good story needs a villain, and, despite his broad smile and polite manners, Margarito plays the role perfectly—if not for his universally panned impression of Parkinson's-sticken Freddie Roach, then certainly for the loaded handwraps he attempted to use against Mosley. Particularly against Cotto's dignified stoicism, Margarito is seen as the worst of all cheaters—worse even than steroid offenders—and even boxing fans, a famously forgiving lot, will be hard pressed to root for him. But then, all rooting is not created equal. You root for a man every time you buy a ticket or a pay-per-view to watch him. Maybe you're rooting for him to get his ass kicked. Doesn't matter to him. You're putting money in his pocket. So there.

Steward talked about the rematch at the postfight press conference.

"In the first fight, I thought Antonio Margarito made Miguel Cotto fight too fast and run away too fast when he threw his punches, so he never did get the full maximum power of his punches," Steward said. "Because before he would finish a combination, Margarito would have him running away. Margarito will always be a tough fight style-wise for Miguel. But Miguel has to punch with authority and fight a much more intelligent fight and maybe force Margarito to back up."

Margarito is viewed generally as being even farther past it than Cotto, based almost entirely on his horrendous showing against Pacquiao. But Pacquiao does that to guys—guys in their prime, guys past their prime, guys who haven't reached their prime yet. So you can't hold that against him. There is a danger for the Mexican in a rematch with Cotto. It is that if he loses, it will serve as "proof" that his wraps were loaded when he beat Cotto in the first fight. But honestly, most assume that to be the case, whether or not it's true.

The fighter with the most to lose is Cotto. Today, he is able to point to the mere suspicion that Margarito's wraps were loaded for the first fight and he is more or less forgiven for the loss. If he wins the rematch, he has "proved" the first match was illegitimate. But what if he loses it? He has nowhere to go, not to mention little time to get there. He has paid a price for his fearlessness, one that not many of us are willing to pay. He is old before his time in a business in which even the young and strong are often lost to the cause. The clock ticks for all of us, but faster for him. One can only hope he knows what time it is. ■

Photography by Howard Schatz

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ONE AND DONE!

The 20 Greatest One-Punch Knockouts Of All-Time

By Eric Raskin

You can complain that some of the fights you most want to see aren't getting made. You can complain that the last year or so has been lacking in terms of Fight of the Year candidates. You can complain that there are too many titles, too many pay-per-views, too much squabbling between promoters, too few boxers willing to enter the ring more than twice a year, and way too few good heavyweights. There are plenty of things boxing has been failing to deliver of late.

But great one-punch knockouts aren't among them.

It's probably just random coincidence, not a symptom of some meaningful trend affecting the sport, but we are suddenly living in a golden age for one-shot kayos. The last five years in a row, THE RING'S Knockout of the Year came via a single punch. In reverse chronological order: Sergio Martinez KO 2 Paul Williams, Manny Pacquiao KO 2 Ricky Hatton, Edison Miranda KO 3 David Banks, Nonito Donaire KO 5 Vic Darchinyan, and Calvin Brock KO 6 Zuri Lawrence. And to top it off, Donaire started 2011 with another spectacular knockout, putting a dent in Fernando Montiel's head with a left hook (though, technically, the "one-punch knockout" designation doesn't apply since the fight didn't end after that one punch).

Clearly, the time is right to celebrate one-punch knockouts, and what better way than by counting down the 20 greatest in the history of boxing? There are a few criteria that go into distinguishing the good from the great from the legendary when it comes to knockouts. Obviously, the bone-crunching aesthetics of the punch itself are paramount. The way in which the victim fell and how close he came to getting up matter too. Drama is an important factor; if the man who scored the knockout was a huge underdog and/or was way behind on points, that adds to the legend of the punch. And you can't discount the significance of the bout. There have been countless amazing knockouts in club fights and four-rounders over the years, but it's illogical to list those alongside one-punch jacks that led to the heavyweight championship of the world changing hands. That's why recent jaw-dropping blastouts like Darnell Wilson-Emmanuel Nwodo and Derrick Jefferson-Maurice Harris didn't quite make this top-20 list.

And Donaire-Montiel didn't make it either, since Montiel (somehow) beat the count and ref Russell Mora let him take a couple more punches. For the same reason, you won't find classic one-punch-caused-it-but-didn't-officially-end-it knockouts like Gaby Canizales-Miguel Lora or Iran Barkley-Tommy Hearns on this list. And speaking of Hearns, if you're wondering why his title-winning effort against Pipino Cuevas doesn't appear here, watch it again; it was a two-punch knockout, not a true one-puncher.

The beauty of this modern age is not just that we're seeing so many spectacular one-punch knockouts but that we can watch them all anytime we want. Every single one of the knockouts listed on the next 20 pages can be enjoyed on YouTube.com. (They might not all be there legally, but that's not your concern, is it?) If there are any here you've never seen, we recommend looking them up. As for the ones you have seen, we recommend watching them again. There's a reason they're ranked among the 20 greatest ever after all.

20 MIKE TYSON KO 2 TREVOR BERBICK
Las Vegas, Nevada, November 22, 1986

Setting The Stage: Though Michael Spinks was the lineal champ at the time, Berbick was one of the two other heavyweight beltholders, and, at age 20, Tyson was attempting to make history by becoming the youngest man ever to claim a piece of the title. "Iron Mike" was, simply put, the hottest thing in boxing. Tyson was a 3-1 favorite as a challenger, something you don't see very often.

As it turned out, those odds were overly generous to Berbick. With his far superior hand and foot speed, Tyson dominated every second of the fight, staggering Berbick several times in the opening round before dropping him with an overpowering combination just a few seconds into round two. Berbick got up and tried to survive Tyson's follow-up onslaught by standing at close range, hoping to smother the incumbent champ and minimize his power. But Tyson, among the finest infighters of his day, made certain that plan backfired spectacularly.

The Knockout Punch: If there's a reason Tyson's historically significant and undeniably destructive kayo of Berbick barely squeaks onto this list instead of landing somewhere in the upper echelon, it's that the knockout blow itself didn't appear all that devastating in real time. In fact, broadcaster Bob Sheridan insisted upon seeing Berbick hit the canvas, "He should be able to get up from this," and indeed, it appeared that way to most of us initially. Tyson stepped in from medium range and landed a single left hook, a shot that didn't look appreciably different from several of the other powershots he'd scored with previously. But this one connected with the perfect spot on the temple, short-circuiting Berbick.

The Effect: This is where Tyson-Berbick makes up for whatever graphic violence may have been lacking in the punch itself. Berbick crashed down on his back. He got up at the count of three and fell right back down again, forcing ringside photographers to pull back as he almost tumbled through the ropes. He stood up a second time and careened sideways across the ring before hitting the canvas for a third time from a single punch. And Berbick tried to rise one more time, but referee Mills Lane reached the count of 10 at the 2:35 mark as Berbick was still stumbling about, an unforgettable ending to a historic heavyweight coronation. Officially, Tyson scored two knockdowns in the second round. But in our memories, there were four knockdowns, three coming from one short, brutal left hook.

PHOTO BY AFP/GETTY IMAGES

19 GEORGE FOREMAN KO 10 MICHAEL MOORER
Las Vegas, Nevada, November 5, 1994

Setting The Stage: Whereas the number-20 entry on this list saw a fighter attempting to make history as the youngest heavyweight champ ever, the main plotline entering our pick for number 19 was Foreman's bid to become the *oldest* heavyweight champ in history. At 45, coming off a loss to Tommy Morrison and 17 months of inactivity, he wasn't expected to be successful. Moorer was undefeated and in his prime at 26, fresh off an upset victory over Evander Holyfield to claim the lineal title. The beloved "Big George" had a punching preacher's chance, and that was about it. Even with all the public sentiment behind him swaying the betting odds in his favor, Foreman was still a 2-1 'dog.

For the better part of 9½ rounds, the fight went as scripted. The quicker Moorer boxed out of his southpaw stance, using a safe but effective game plan not unlike what Morrison had employed. He wasn't hurting Foreman, but he was piling up points, building a lead of 88-83 on two scorecards and a curious 86-85 on the third. With three rounds to go, Foreman needed a knockout—or at least a few knockdowns—to win, and, though he was applying pressure and landing decent shots on occasion, it didn't look like a realistic possibility.

The Knockout Punch: Foreman was having a strong 10th round, but still, nobody saw the ending coming. You could argue that it was technically a four-punch knockout (and that's part of why it isn't higher on this list). A one-two landed, seemingly with no significant effect—but Moorer later told a documentary crew that he was foggy after that right hand struck him. Three seconds later, Foreman delivered another one-two, and the right hand connected perfectly with the point of Moorer's chin and spelled the end of the fight. Maybe the final four punches worked in concert with each other, but, in the moment, it *felt* like a one-punch knockout. One second, Moorer seemed in complete control; the next, Foreman had regained the heavyweight crown a full two decades after losing it.

The Effect: Moorer went down flat on his back, blood immediately pooling on his lips. He struggled to lift his head and, by the end of ref Joe Cortez' count, had done no more than slowly roll over onto his knees. It was like something out of a movie, and the scene was enhanced by HBO broadcaster Jim Lampley's classic call, "It happened! It happened!" Foreman knelt in the corner of the ring, his prayers answered and history made via single punch.

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/GETTY IMAGES

18 LENNOX LEWIS KO 4 HASIM RAHMAN
Las Vegas, Nevada, November 17, 2001

Setting The Stage: One knockout for the ages begat another, as Rahman's monumental upset of Lewis in South Africa for the heavyweight championship seven months earlier set up an inevitable rematch. Going into that first fight, undisputed champ Lewis was unbeaten in his previous 14 bouts and seemingly at the peak of his powers, and Rahman, though a legit contender, wasn't expected to trouble him. Lewis saw it the same way, which was why he undertrained, didn't give himself enough time to acclimatize to the altitude, and ended up six feet closer to sea level when Rahman flattened him in the fifth round.

Rahman did everything he could to get inside Lewis' head and attempt to render the talent gulf in Lewis' favor irrelevant. But on the night of the rematch, Lewis' confidence was fully intact, and he was focused intently on revenge. The plan was to dictate with a stiff jab and capitalize whenever Rahman made amateurish mistakes, such as whiffing with a powerpunch and losing his balance or sticking both arms out straight when the Brit tried to reach him with the left hook. Rahman suffered a cut in the first round and was comprehensively dominated from there, unable to cope with Lewis' discipline and punch variety. By the start of the fourth round, "The Rock's" single shot that altered heavyweight history in Africa seemed a distant memory.

The Knockout Punch: Rahman's bad habit of sticking his arms out bit him just over a minute into round four. Lewis threw a half-steam left hook to get Rahman to extend those arms and leave his head exposed and vulnerable; then he followed with the best right hand of a career that was full of crushing rights. The punch reverberated throughout the Mandalay Bay Events Center as it connected perfectly with the left side of Rahman's jaw, all 246 pounds of Lennox Lewis behind it. Add to its propulsion seven months of obsession, and it was a hell of a right hand indeed.

The Effect: Rahman fell flat on his back, his head striking the canvas right in the "O" in Don King's first name on the painted-on logo. Blood streamed from his nostril down his left cheek, and though the soon-to-be-ex-champ willed himself up for a moment at the count of eight, he spilled forward into the ropes, where referee Joe Cortez finished the count with The Rock on all fours. Lewis pounded the left side of his chest in triumph. Had he been pounding it as hard as he pounded Rahman a few seconds earlier, his heart would have been in a world of hurt.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

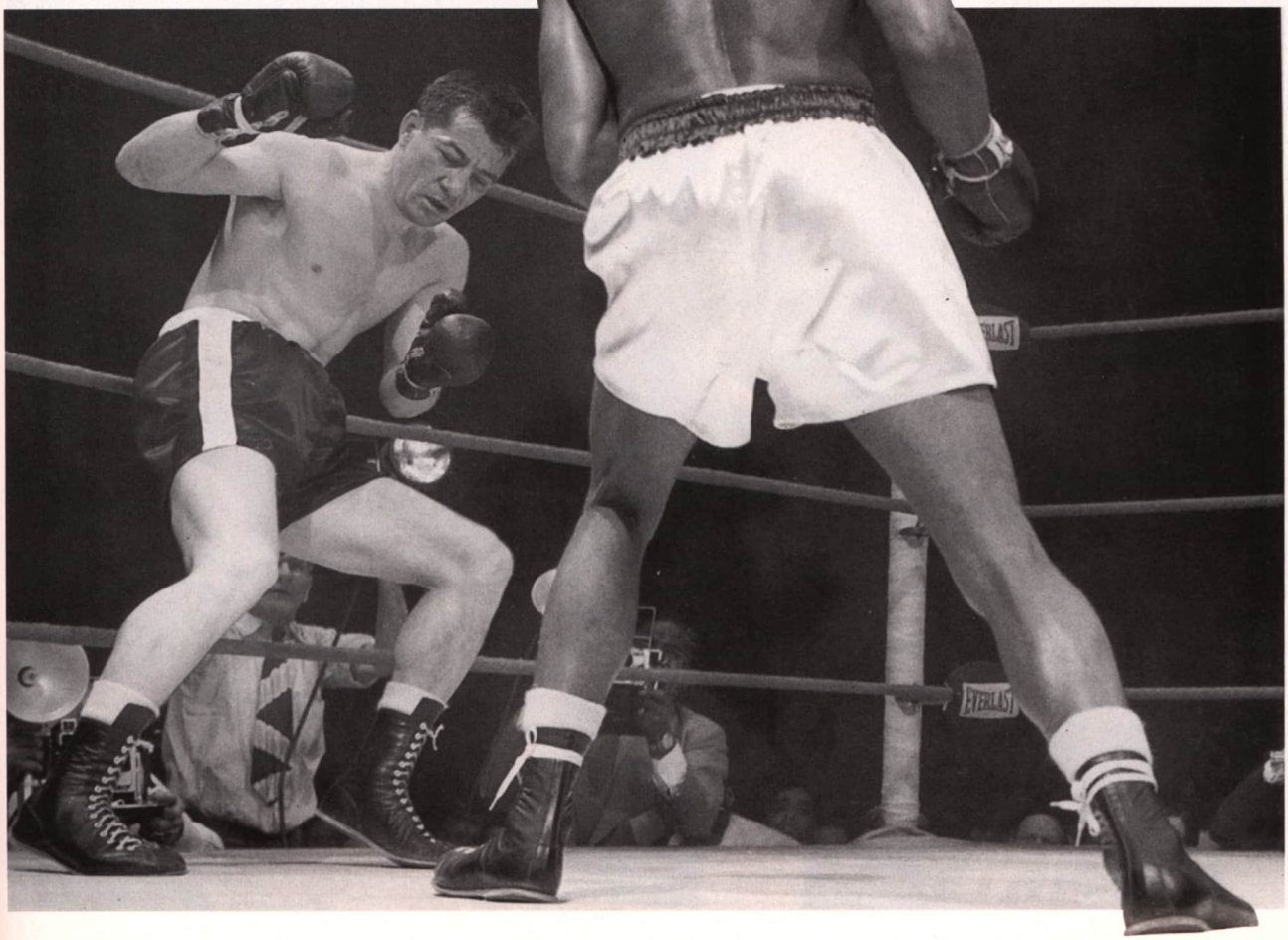
17 SUGAR RAY ROBINSON KO 3 ROCKY GRAZIANO
Chicago, Illinois, April 16, 1952

Setting The Stage: This was about as big a matchup of superstars as could be made in the early 1950s, but educated observers also knew it had mismatch potential. For you younger fans, think a rich man's Floyd Mayweather vs. a rich man's Arturo Gatti. A former middleweight champ, Graziano had been carefully navigated through a 21-fight career-rebuilding unbeaten streak coming in, while reigning middleweight champ Robinson was still more or less in his prime and entered with a mind-boggling 130-2-2 record. Graziano had one chance, and one chance only, to win: Swing as hard as he possibly could and pray that Sugar Ray's all-time-great chin takes the night off.

From the opening bell, Graziano was surprisingly effective. He wasn't necessarily winning rounds, but he was keeping pace with Robinson and occasionally landing heavy shots that convinced the man for whom the term "pound-for-pound" was invented to back off. Early in the third round, Robinson seemed to stun Graziano with a combination and immediately opened up with follow-up punches, but he left himself open and Graziano shockingly clubbed him to the canvas with a right hand. Sugar Ray immediately bounced up unhurt and reentered the fray, but Graziano had made his statement: This wasn't a mismatch; this was a real fight.

The Knockout Punch: It didn't remain a real fight for long. About one minute after getting knocked down, fully recovered and boxing slickly, Robinson came out of a clinch with a few punches that steered Graziano to the ropes. Then he threw a two-punch combination with Graziano trapped. The left hand hooked around and missed. The right traveled straight and true to the point of Graziano's chin. Out popped his mouthpiece. Down went Graziano.

The Effect: The challenger got about halfway to a seated position. Then, with ref Tommy Gilmore's count at six, Rocky's right leg began circling as if he was trying to pedal a bicycle only he could see. Graziano got up just after the count of 10 and still wanted to go, but the fight was already over—and it was a good thing for Graziano, who quickly returned to kicking awkwardly with his leg (this time the left one), trying to reestablish the connection between his brain and his limbs. He was frustrated that the fight had come to an end so suddenly, especially because he'd been doing well up to that point, but there was no shame in getting knocked out by the greatest all-around fighter the world had ever known—and one of the very greatest single-shot punchers as well.



16 ROY JONES KO 4 VIRGIL HILL
Biloxi, Mississippi, April 25, 1998

Setting The Stage: Because of a controversial disqualification loss to Montell Griffin a year earlier, Jones had fallen from his number-one pound-for-pound perch on many people's lists, but, in terms of pure ability, he was still widely regarded, at age 29, as the best fighter on the planet. Hill's recent defeat by decision against Dariusz Michalczewski was more telling. It suggested that, at age 34, the longtime light heavyweight titlist was officially on the slide. He also couldn't make 175 pounds anymore, so the fighters agreed to a catchweight of 177, making this HBO-televised pairing a non-title fight.

And for three rounds, it wasn't much of a fight at all. Jones had never been a highly aggressive, high-output fighter, while Hill's career was built mostly on jabbing and defense. So there wasn't much to get excited about early on. Jones was in control, earning 10 points in each round, but he was producing nothing on par with his dynamic first-round revenge kayo of Griffin eight months earlier.

The Knockout Punch: Some have called it the greatest bodyshot ever. There was nothing of note happening early in the fourth round, just two skilled prize fighters staring at each other with their hands up, when suddenly Jones struck with a right hand to the rib cage and Hill reacted as if he'd been hit not with a gloved fist but with a spiked cannonball. Making it more incredible was how unusual the punch was for Jones, who hardly ever made a point of working the body and was known for knocking opponents out with his lightning left hook, not his right hand. It was one very random punch to the body thrown by a fighter so gifted he could sometimes destroy people unintentionally, and that's precisely what he had done here.

The Effect: Often, bodyshots affect their victims on a delay. Not this one. Hill crumpled immediately to the canvas, holding his left side in agony. He showed tremendous heart to get back to his feet but couldn't stand up straight, and ref Fred Steinwinder III called off the fight at 1:10 of the fourth. Everyone's suspicions were later confirmed: Hill had suffered a broken rib and spent the night in the hospital. Virtually everybody expected Jones to defeat Hill, but not like this. Not with one punch. And especially not with one bone-busting right hand to the body.

PHOTO BY KEN REGAN/HBO

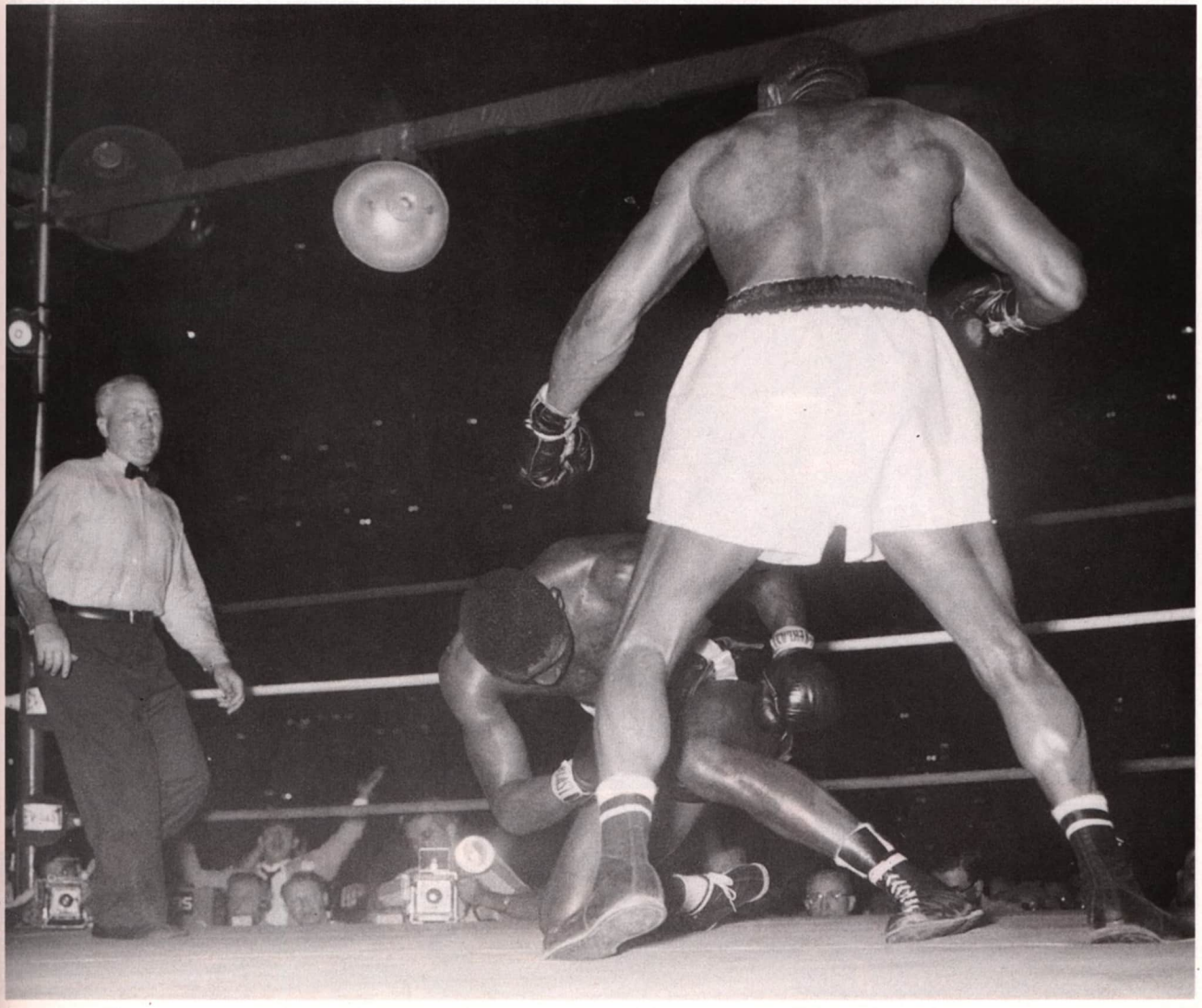
15 JERSEY JOE WALCOTT KO 7 EZZARD CHARLES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, July 18, 1951

Setting The Stage: Charles was a 5-1 favorite entering this fight, and why wouldn't he be? "The Cincinnati Cobra" was the reigning heavyweight champ, at age 30 he was seven years younger than Walcott, and, oh yeah, he'd already beaten Walcott twice. One of those fights occurred just four months earlier, with Charles scoring a ninth-round knockdown and a one-sided unanimous decision. There seemed no need for a third meeting, but it happened anyway. A crowd of 28,000 turned up at Forbes Field to see the 37-year-old Jersey Joe attempt to become the oldest ever to win the heavyweight crown and to do so in his record *fifth* shot at the belt.

From the start, the fight looked different from its predecessors. The action was slow and measured with Walcott generally getting the better of it. He stunned Charles momentarily in the third, but otherwise there were few highlights—just the challenger boxing well and building a lead. Through six rounds, Walcott was ahead on two scorecards and even on the third though the general feeling was that Charles was just starting slow and planning to come on as the older man's energy dropped off.

The Knockout Punch: Maybe Walcott would have faded in the late rounds, but we'll never know because there were no late rounds. Less than a minute into round seven, referee Buck McTiernan broke up a clinch, Charles took a few steps back, Walcott took a few forward, and Jersey Joe stepped in with an absolutely crushing left, a hybrid of a hook and an uppercut that twisted Charles' jaw in ways in which the jaw was not meant to twist. The left hand was delivered with astonishing speed, suddenness, accuracy, and torque. It was, to state it simply, a perfect punch.

The Effect: Charles went down face first, began to push himself up at the count of six, got to his feet, and immediately tumbled right down on his back as McTiernan tolled 10 and waved off the fight. Charles had a good chin and had only been stopped once in 72 prior fights, but he couldn't take this devastating shot that ended a 24-fight winning streak. And you could argue that he was never quite the same afterward, losing at least twice in every remaining year of his fighting career.



14 ANTONIO TARVER KO 2 ROY JONES
Las Vegas, Nevada, May 15, 2004

Setting The Stage: At age 35 and just two fights removed from winning a heavyweight belt, Jones was the universally recognized pound-for-pound king. But his hold on that position was suddenly tenuous following a disputed majority decision win over Tarver in his previous fight. The rematch was meant to answer all questions. Was Jones physically diminished from becoming a heavyweight and dropping back down to light heavy? Did he just not take Tarver seriously enough the first time? Was Tarver's style all wrong for him regardless?

Instead, the rematch began with one more question: As ref Jay Nady finished with the fighters' instructions, Tarver blurted, "You got any excuses tonight, Roy?" It was the most memorable final-instructions utterance in boxing history. The first minute of the fight was decidedly less memorable, as both natural counterpunchers moved, feinted, and sized up one another. In the second half of the opening round, Jones took over, his legendary hand speed allowing him to score with numerous straight right hands to the head and body. The second round began with more of the same, and, midway through the round, according to CompuBox, Tarver had landed a total of only six punches in 4½ minutes of action. Sometimes, however, it's quality, not quantity.

The Knockout Punch: As he'd been doing all fight, Jones struck with a straight right hand—only this time, Tarver was ready to counter. Jones' punch grazed him but was generally ineffective, and "The Magic Man" came out of a slight crouch uncorking a left cross that Jones never saw. Some (mostly Jones loyalists) called it a lucky punch because Tarver's eyes were closed as he threw it, but he knew where Jones was standing and the shot was obviously aimed at his chin, so there wasn't much lucky about it.

The Effect: It was a sight some of us thought we'd never see, Jones flat on his back, seriously hurt. He rolled over onto all fours, teetered forward onto his knees and shoulders, summoned the strength to rise, and saw Nady waving his arms as a groggy Jones staggered slowly across the ring. There have been more definitive knockouts in history; hell, given Jones' lofty status and near-perfect record, many refs might have allowed the fight to go on (though to do so would have been a mistake). But rarely has there been a more unexpected knockout, one that seemed so incomprehensible at the moment it occurred. Jones had taken to calling himself "Superman," and many fans bought it. Tarver never did, and, with one left hand, he removed the cape forever.

PHOTO BY JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

13 MIKE MCCALLUM KO 5 DONALD CURRY
Las Vegas, Nevada, July 18, 1987

Setting The Stage: Until one year earlier, Curry was widely viewed as the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, but a loss to Lloyd Honeyghan in an upset for the ages forced a perception reset. Two comeback wins later, "The Lone Star Cobra" seemed back on track and ready for the test that would tell us if the Honeyghan fight was a fluke, against undefeated 1976 Jamaican Olympian McCallum. This was a toss-up fight for junior middleweight supremacy, with pound-for-pound positioning hanging in the balance as well.

And for the first four rounds, Curry looked like the same pound-for-pound force he had been prior to facing Honeyghan. McCallum was busier, but Curry's faster hands were beating "The Bodysnatcher" to the punch and landing at a much higher rate (50 percent to 31 percent, according to CompuBox). Entering the fifth round, Curry led by one point on two of the cards and had a 40-36 shutout cooking on the third. The only strikes he had against him were a left eye that was swelling from above and the fact that he was beginning to stand still in close against McCallum, a questionable tactic given the defending titlist's nickname. McCallum, meanwhile, was exhibiting very little movement, just standing flat-footed and fighting the way a puncher would.

The Knockout Punch: About a minute into the fifth round, Curry threw a left to the body and made one of the worst mistakes you can make in boxing: He paused to admire his work. The Texan stood right in front of McCallum with his hands down, a bit too comfortable as he looked for his next opening, and, before he could find one, McCallum detonated a wide left hook on his chin. HBO blow-by-blow man Barry Tompkins would say of it a few moments later, "That is as classic a one-punch knockout as I've seen!"

The Effect: Curry fell flat on his back and hit his head on the canvas and didn't move for the first eight ticks of Richard Steele's count. He willed himself to a sitting position, but that was as far as he could get before the count of 10. Like that, Curry's time as a P-4-P player was over. He won one more belt a year later but was never again held in such high regard and lost four of his final seven fights. McCallum surprisingly lost his very next fight, against Sumbu Kalambay, but he recovered to enjoy a Hall of Fame career; whereas, Curry remains on the wrong side of the Canastota bubble to this day.

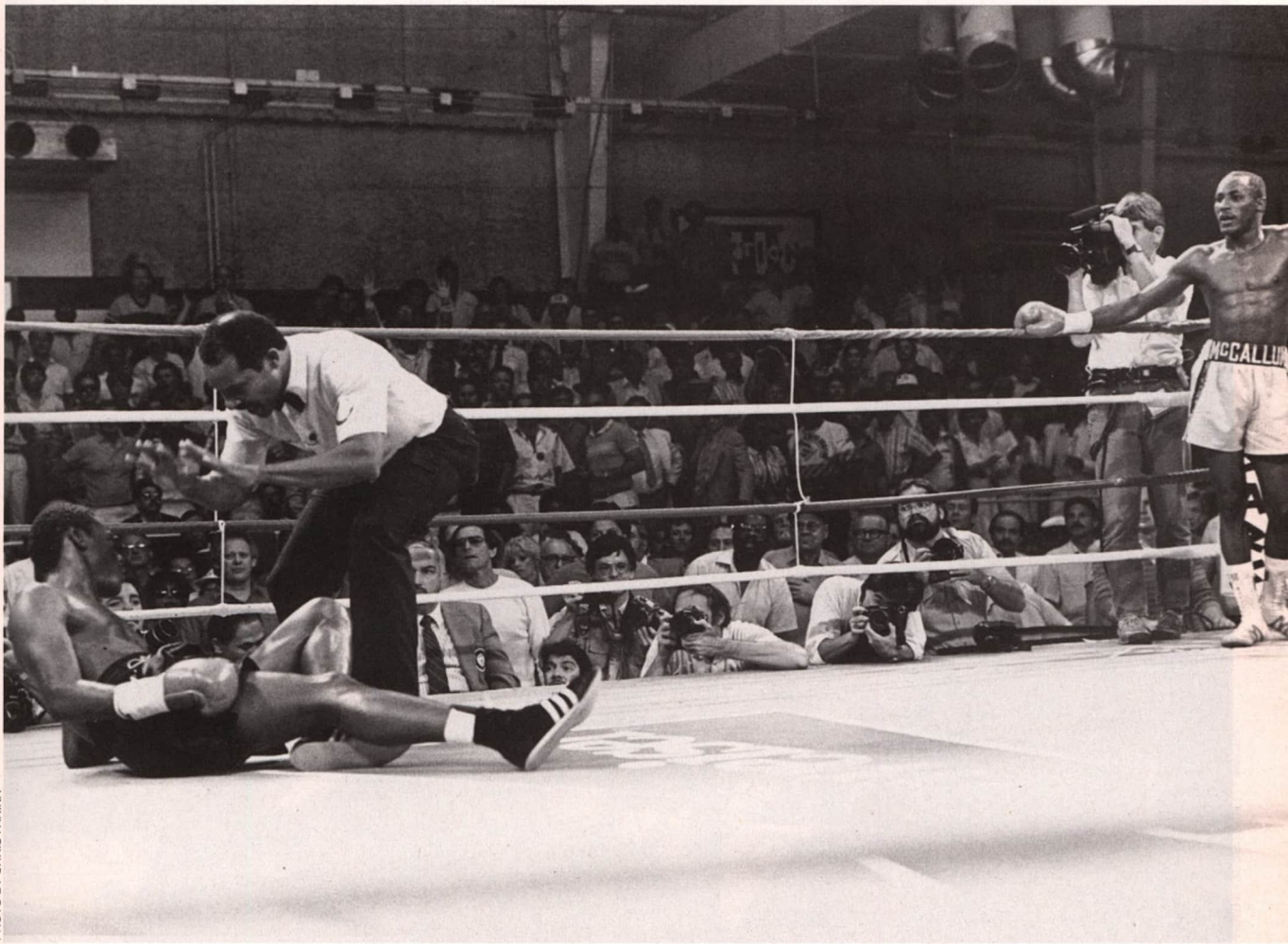


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

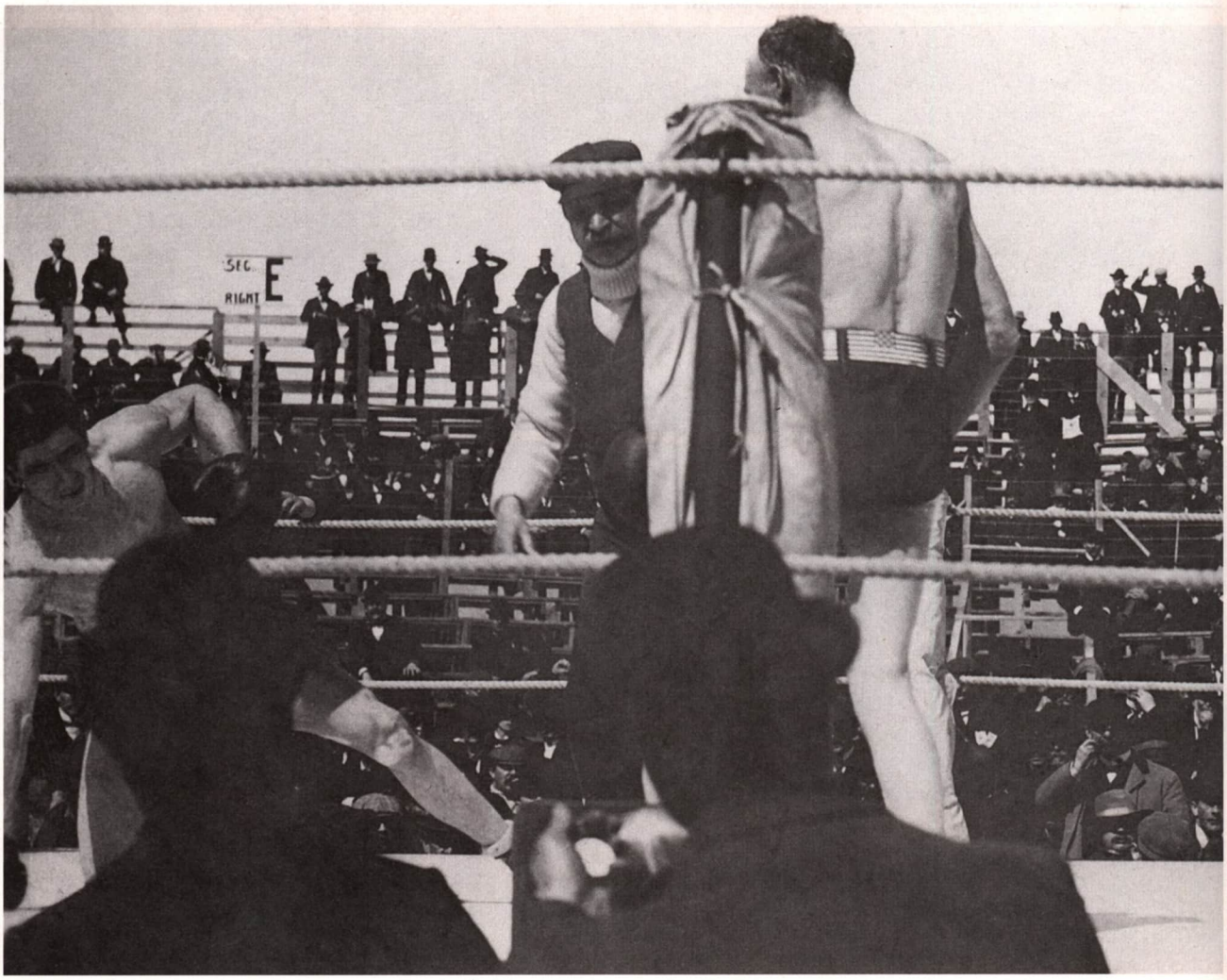
12 BOB FITZSIMMONS KO 14 JAMES J. CORBETT
Carson City, Nevada, March 17, 1897

Setting The Stage: Corbett's heavyweight title reign was not exactly the busiest in history—but then again, there wasn't a whole lot of history to compare it to yet since he was only the second champion since the adoption of the Marquess of Queensberry Rules. Since defeating John L. Sullivan in 1892, "Gentleman Jim" had fought just twice in nearly five years, a three-round knockout of Charley Mitchell and a four-round draw against Tom Sharkey. Fitzsimmons came in as a former middleweight champion and a terribly undersized heavyweight (167 pounds), but the Brit known as "The Fighting Blacksmith" had a reputation as a hellacious puncher, with 48 knockouts among his 54 prior victories.

It wasn't the first boxing match ever filmed (that landmark occasion came three years earlier), but the Fitzsimmons-Corbett fight is believed to be the first "feature film" ever shown publicly. With director Enoch J. Rector's cameras rolling, Corbett got out to an early lead with his clever footwork and ring intelligence. In the sixth round, he dropped Fitzsimmons to his knees with a two-fisted combination, but "Ruby Robert" rose at the count of seven and gradually battled his way back into the fight. By the 14th round, Fitzsimmons seemed in control as the champion was visibly tiring.

The Knockout Punch: Though some have called Roy Jones' knockout of Virgil Hill the greatest bodyshot ever thrown, Fitzsimmons' remains the most famous. If you say the words "solar plexus punch," any fight fan knows exactly to which you're referring. In the 14th round, Fitzsimmons sidestepped a Corbett jab and uncorked a left that landed high on the abdomen, knocking the wind out of the champion. With one spectacular shot to the body, the most prestigious title in sports was about to change hands.

The Effect: Corbett froze, quickly fell to his right knee, then teetered to the right side, balancing on his knee and his right glove. He attempted to push off the canvas and stand up, but his body wouldn't respond before referee George Siler reached the count of 10. Interestingly, observer Wyatt Earp claimed afterward that Fitzsimmons should have been disqualified for a punch to the jaw when Corbett was down, but the film shows no evidence to support that. It was a historic moment in boxing and one that has endured for more than a century because Rector's cameras were there to document it.



11 MANNY PACQUIAO KO 2 RICKY HATTON
Las Vegas, Nevada, May 2, 2009

Setting The Stage: With Floyd Mayweather officially retired, Pacquiao became the only choice for number-one fighter pound-for-pound—but the debate was about to pick up again since Mayweather chose the day of Pacquiao-Hatton to formally announce his return against Juan Manuel Marquez. It was statement time for "Pac-Man," who was coming off a destructive upset TKO of the much larger Oscar De La Hoya and was about a 4-1 betting favorite over the popular but limited lineal junior welterweight champion Hatton. The Brit had suffered his lone defeat against Mayweather in '07 via 10th-round stoppage, so the goal for Pacquiao was clearly to get rid of him faster than that.

In front of a passionate crowd packed with both Filipino and British fans (the latter considerably louder), the gulf between the fighters' talents proved even greater than anyone expected. With his supernatural speed, Pacquiao landed the southpaw right hook with ease from the start. In the final minute of the opening round, he dropped Hatton with a counter hook. A vicious combination ending with a straight left resulted in a second knockdown in the closing seconds. By the end of one round, the outcome had already been decided. It was just a matter of when and how Pacquiao would finish off "The Hitman."

The Knockout Punch: Hatton fought on gamely in the second and looked like he was going to last the round on his feet until, just after the 10-second warning clanged, Pacquiao struck with a sickening left hand to the jaw, turning Hatton's lights out instantly. Pacquiao's speed had long been an extraordinary characteristic, but never before had he shown one-punch power like this. In a legendary career filled with devastating left hands, this is sure to be remembered as the best of them.

The Effect: Hatton was unconscious before he hit the canvas. He fell flat on his back, not moving a muscle before ref Kenny Bayless waved it off with one second remaining in the second round. The next minute or two were downright scary, with Hatton rolled over on his side, his mouth leaking drool, his eyes fluttering slightly. He eventually regained full consciousness and was just fine, but the fact that he never fought again gives you a sense of just how physically and emotionally devastating this knockout punch from Pacquiao was.

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

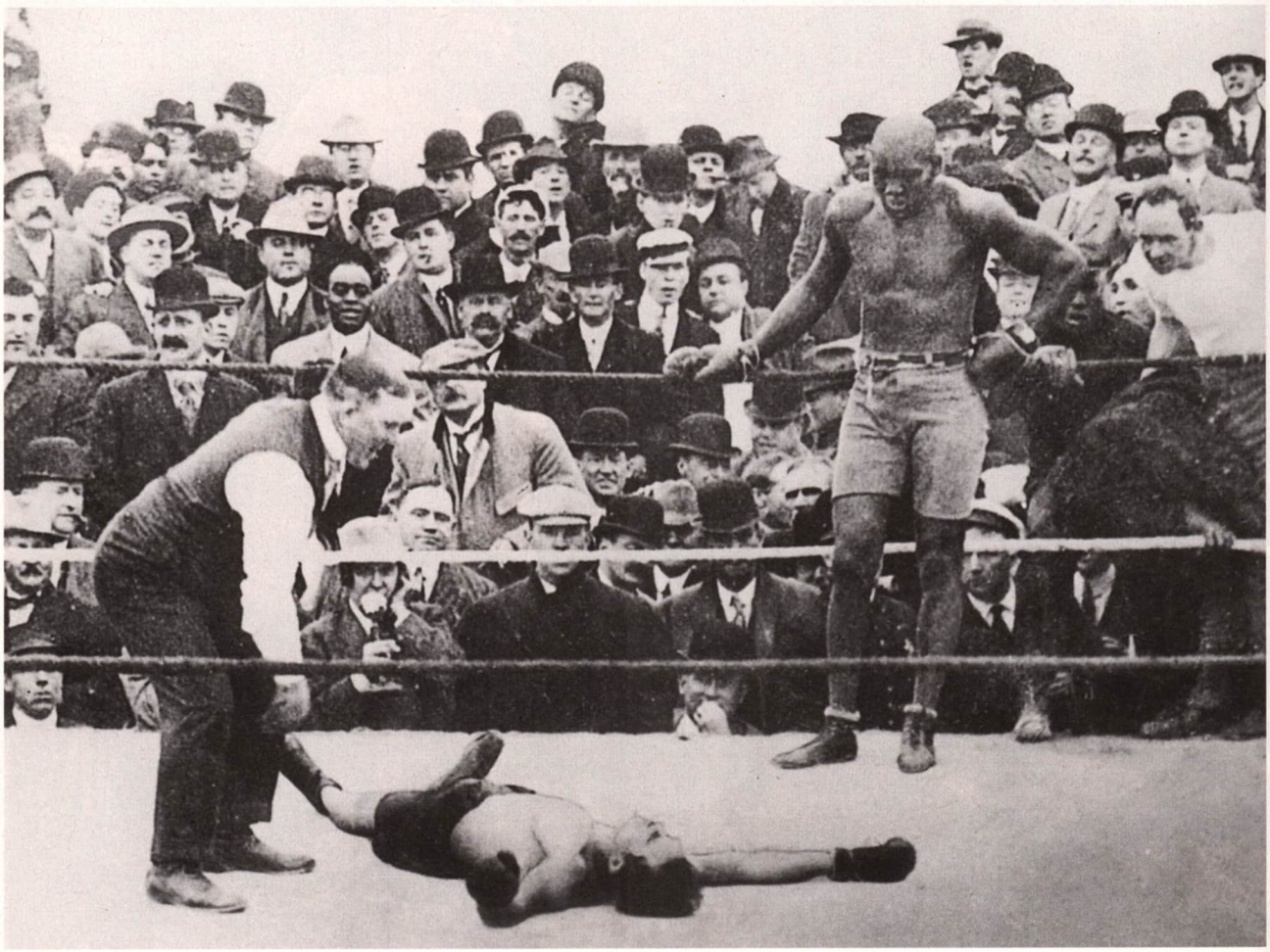
10 JACK JOHNSON KO 12 STANLEY KETCHEL
Colma, California, October 16, 1909

Setting The Stage: When this bout took place more than a century ago, the notion of the middleweight champion challenging the heavyweight champion wasn't quite as far-fetched as it is now. But that's not to say it wasn't a stretch. Ketchel was the reigning middleweight champ and a fearsome puncher in his weight class, but he seemed a major underdog against Johnson, who'd made three successful defenses since knocking out Tommy Burns to become the first black heavyweight king. The rumor going around entering their title fight was that Johnson intended to carry Ketchel to make it look good for the cameras filming the event. And Ketchel did his part before the fight to make it look good by wearing cowboy boots and shoulder pads for a public appearance with Johnson, masking the size differential somewhat.

Once the bell rang, however, there was no masking the disparity between the 6'1½", 205½-pound Johnson and the 5'9", 170¼-pound Ketchel. It did look in spots like Johnson was carrying Ketchel as rumored—but at the same time, "The Galveston Giant" was doing enough to let Ketchel know he was in over his head, most notably in the second round when he dropped the challenger with a combination. From rounds three through seven, Johnson dominated the fight and bloodied Ketchel's nose, but the middleweight champ rallied in rounds nine through 11. In round 12 of the scheduled 20-rounder, Ketchel caught Johnson with a sudden overhand right, dropping the bigger man. If there was a script, Ketchel had just broken from it. Johnson got up at referee Jack Welch's count of six. If there was a script, Johnson wasn't planning on following it anymore either.

The Knockout Punch: As Ketchel moved in, Johnson landed a crushing right hand, the first punch either man threw following the shocking knockdown of the champion. Johnson's momentum propelled him forward (and it seemed, in the grainy film footage, like Johnson was throwing another right hand that mostly missed) and sent him hurtling over the fallen Ketchel. One punch had put Johnson down, but the very next punch reversed the positions with finality.

The Effect: Ketchel was left flat on his back, spread eagle, for the first nine seconds of Welch's count, just beginning to sit up when the ref reached 10. What Johnson was doing during the count remains a topic of discussion 100 years later, as some believe he wiped two of Ketchel's teeth from his glove, while other reports had him showing members of the press the teeth still embedded in the gloves after it was all over. Either way, Johnson's knockout punch apparently knocked out more than just his challenger's upset hopes.



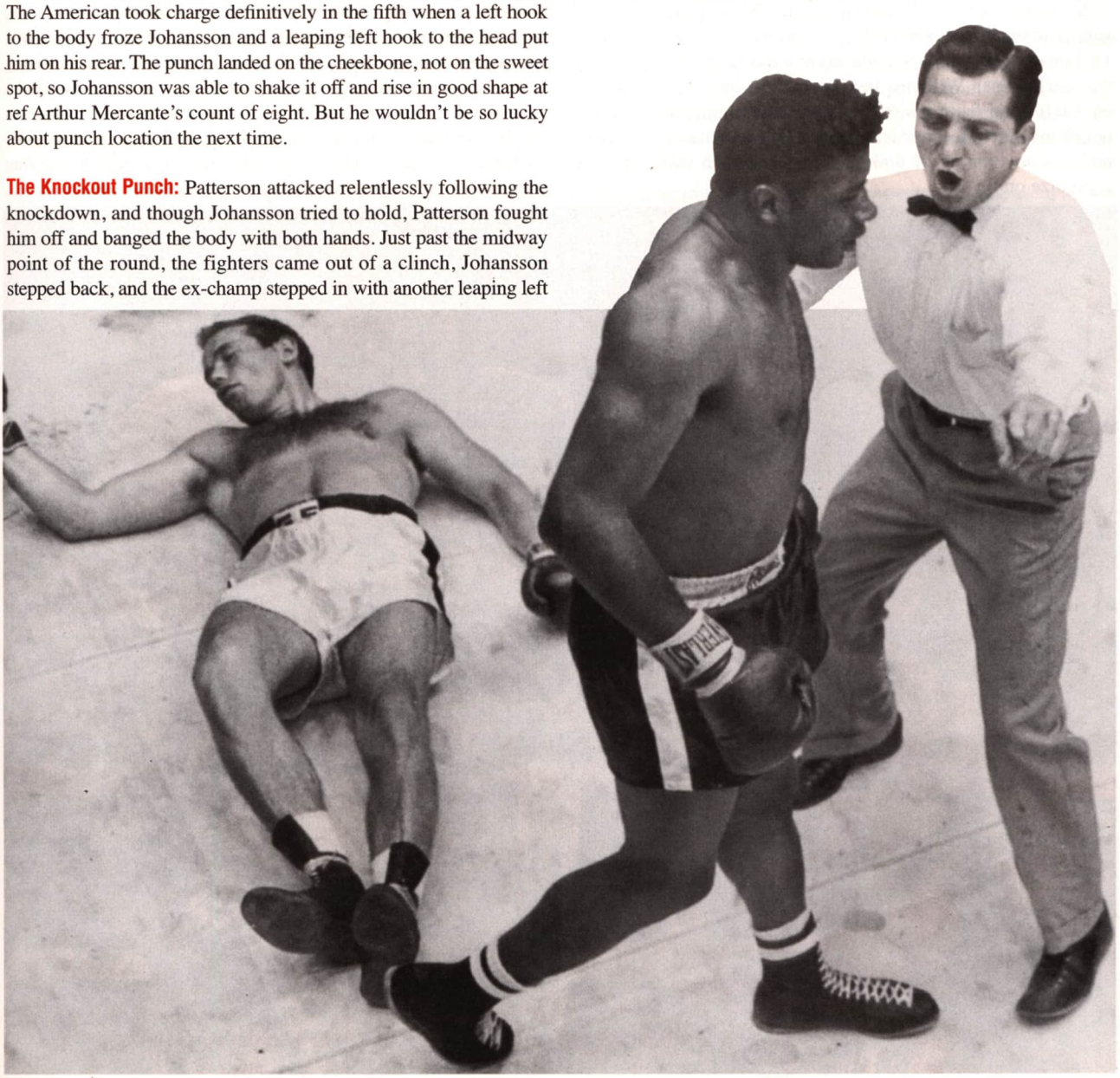
9 FLOYD PATTERSON KO 5 INGEMAR JOHANSSON
New York, New York, June 20, 1960

Setting The Stage: One year earlier, the handsome undefeated Swede Johansson strolled into Yankee Stadium and knocked Patterson down seven times in three rounds to annex the heavyweight title. Neither fought for a full 12 months—probably not a bad thing for Patterson, who had his share of cobwebs to clear. But he came back refreshed and focused on making history, as his challenge of Johansson at the Polo Grounds gave the 25-year-old Patterson a chance to become the first man ever to regain the heavyweight title.

The rematch drew a crowd of 45,000, and Patterson got the better of the action from the start. Before the first round was over, Johansson was reddening under his left eye. Late in the third, Patterson hammered the champion to the body, opening him up for a combination upstairs that momentarily rocked him along the ropes. The American took charge definitively in the fifth when a left hook to the body froze Johansson and a leaping left hook to the head put him on his rear. The punch landed on the cheekbone, not on the sweet spot, so Johansson was able to shake it off and rise in good shape at ref Arthur Mercante's count of eight. But he wouldn't be so lucky about punch location the next time.

The Knockout Punch: Patterson attacked relentlessly following the knockdown, and though Johansson tried to hold, Patterson fought him off and banged the body with both hands. Just past the midway point of the round, the fighters came out of a clinch, Johansson stepped back, and the ex-champ stepped in with another leaping left hook that came about as close as any punch ever has to taking a man's head off. It was the stuff of legends—and of replays, as that iconic left hand made highlight reels and boxing-broadcast opening sequences for decades to come.

The Effect: Johansson's head spun almost 180 degrees, and he fell flat on his back, not moving during Mercante's count except for a slight twitch in his left foot. When the 10 count was complete, Patterson ran over to help Johansson out, but the two-time heavyweight king's cornermen quickly yanked Patterson off to celebrate the victory with him. A couple of minutes later, Patterson was announced as the first man to regain the heavyweight title—and Johansson's cornermen were still struggling to peel him off the canvas.



8 SERGIO MARTINEZ KO 2 PAUL WILLIAMS
Atlantic City, New Jersey, November 20, 2010

Setting The Stage: Eleven months earlier, Martinez came in as a late sub for middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik and gave Williams all he could handle en route to a narrow decision loss in a Fight of the Year candidate. When Pavlik-Williams negotiations failed a few months later, again Martinez stepped up, and the Argentine outpointed Pavlik over 12 rounds to become the lineal champ at 160. Now that supremacy in the division was at stake and both fighters were on every pound-for-pound list, the Martinez-Williams rematch simply *had* to happen. HBO dug in its heels and insisted it wouldn't buy a fight for either against anyone but each other. So a deal was consummated to bring the fight back to the same city that hosted them a year earlier.

Round 13 between "Maravilla" and "The Punisher" looked similar to the 12 that preceded it—close and well fought. Round 14, however, was quite a bit different. Less than a minute in, the 6'2" string bean Williams held his hands low and got clipped by a left hand from his fellow southpaw, though he took the punch just fine. Martinez had found a hole in Williams' defense; now it was a matter of finding a perfect punch with which to capitalize on it.

The Knockout Punch: Martinez' trainer, Gabriel Sarmiento, revealed after the fight that he drew up a very specific game plan that included knocking Williams out with a left hand over his low-hanging right in the second round. He even wrote the plan down on a piece of paper as proof. And Martinez apparently believed in the plan and followed it to the letter. About 20 seconds after his left hand shot that landed but didn't hurt Williams, Martinez timed him for another one and delivered it with maximum impact—all of his weight turning into it, Williams doing his part by leaning into the punch and never seeing it.

The Effect: Williams was rendered immediately unconscious and fell forward to the canvas, unable to tell his arms to extend and break his fall. He crashed down on the side of his face, where he remained motionless until ref Earl Morton aborted his count. And Williams left us with the eerie image of his eyes wide open while the rest of his body was closed for business. Williams was thought to have a first-rate chin, but a punch like the one Martinez threw can render such a reputation irrelevant. This knockout was too recent to place in real historical perspective yet, but boxing fans know what they saw, and what they saw was one of the most devastating punches ever delivered in a championship fight.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

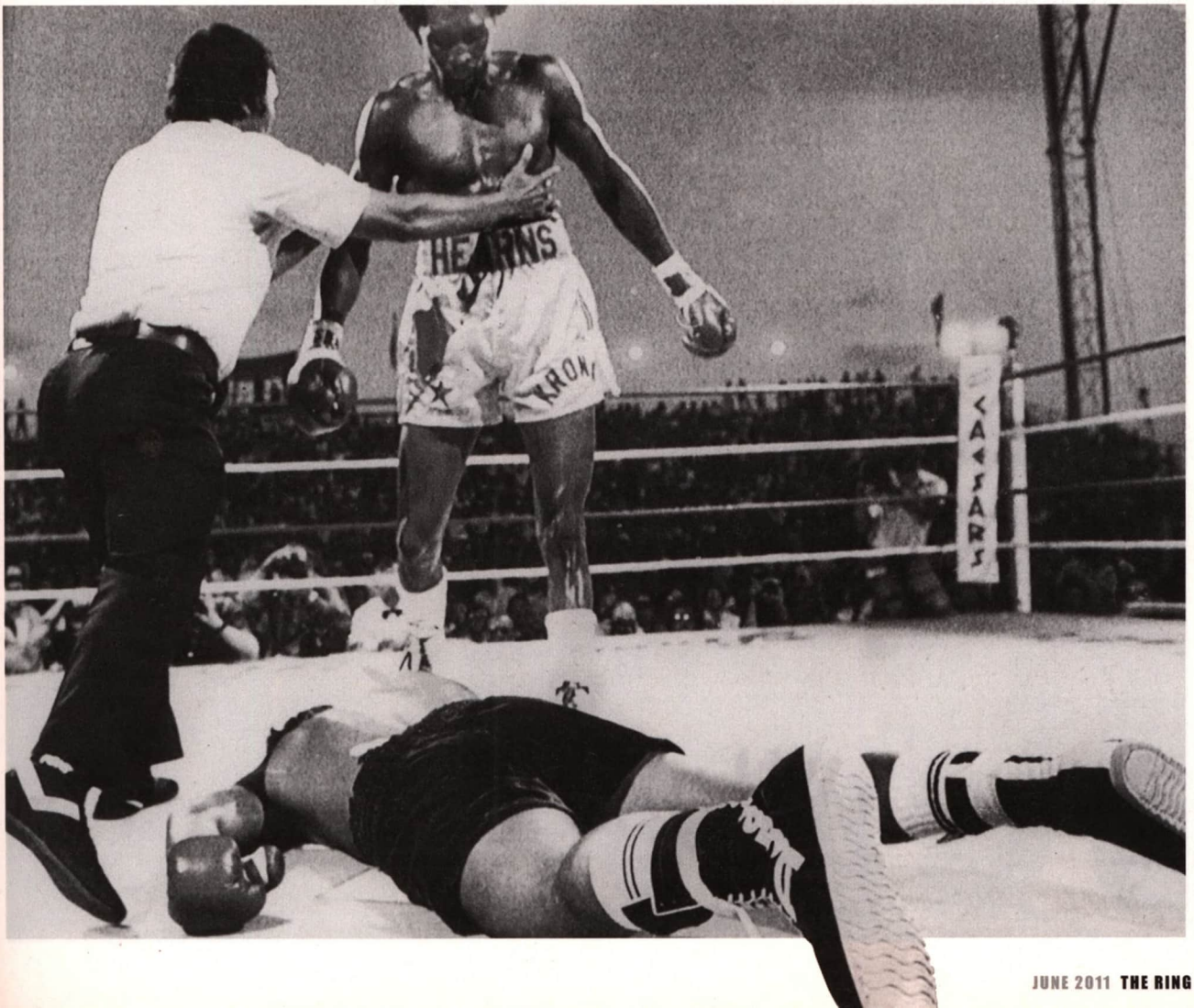
7 THOMAS HEARNS KO 2 ROBERTO DURAN
Las Vegas, Nevada, June 15, 1984

Setting The Stage: The welterweight/middleweight superstars of the 1980s—Hearns, Duran, Sugar Ray Leonard, Marvelous Marvin Hagler, and Wilfred Benitez—gave us one of the great round robins in the history of boxing, and nearly every bout among them was close and competitive. Though Hearns was in his prime at 25 and fighting at his peak weight of 154 pounds whereas Duran was one day away from turning 33 and had been at his best as a lightweight, the general expectation was that this meeting of superstars would be another competitive fight. After all, in his previous fight, Duran had lost very narrowly in a challenge of middleweight champ Hagler, and, in the fight prior to that, had knocked out Davey Moore in brutal fashion to claim a 154-pound belt. Hearns, meanwhile, was on a six-fight winning streak since his loss to Leonard in their classic first meeting, but he hadn't scored a knockout in almost two years.

Ring announcer Chuck Hull declared before the fight, "No longer is he called 'The Motor City Cobra,' he has returned as Thomas 'The Hit Man' Hearns!" Hearns wasted little time showing where the nickname came from. Midway through the opening round, Hearns' first landed powerpunch, an overhand right, staggered Duran, and, about a minute later, a sizzling right put Duran down for only the second time in his career. He got up with 20 seconds left in the round, and a combination dropped the Panamanian again. This time, he rose and the bell came to his rescue. The fight was as good as over at that point—but fortunately for fight fans, the inevitable kayo came in a spectacular form.

The Knockout Punch: Hearns hurt Duran twice early in the second round, and, with 59 seconds ticked off the clock and Duran standing with his back to the ropes, Hearns landed a looping right to the jaw that produced a sickening thud. It also produced the only pure knockout loss in Duran's legendary 119-fight career.

The Effect: Duran was already out before his frozen body pitched forward and his face smacked the canvas. If anything, that smack seemed to revive him a bit, but he could do no more than lift his head an inch or two off the mat, and his cornermen ran into the ring to stop the fight immediately. As great as the punch from Hearns was and as significant as the fight was, what really sets this one apart was the man lying on the canvas. When a punch does that to Roberto Duran, it earns a place among the greatest ever.



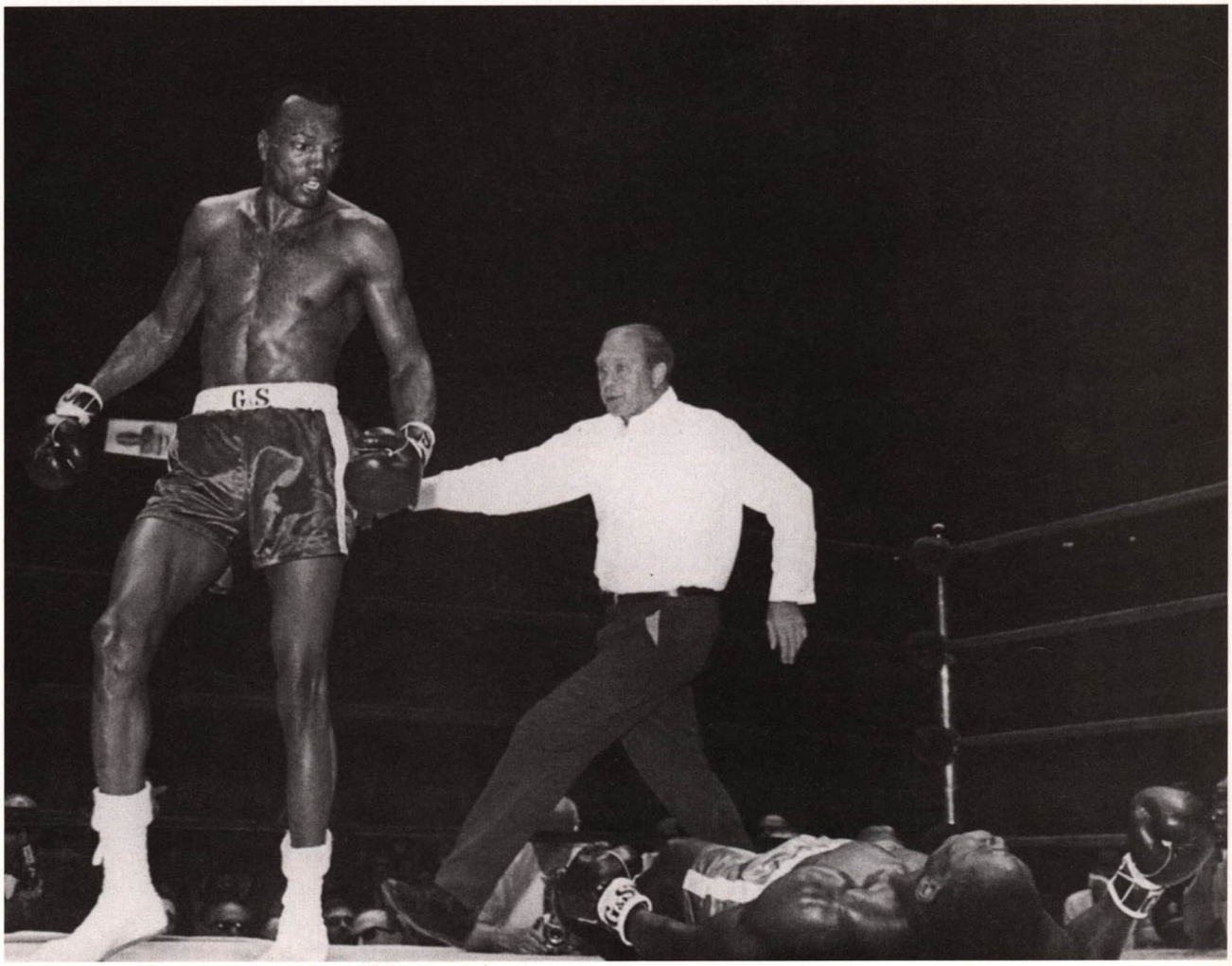
6 BOB FOSTER KO 4 DICK TIGER
New York, New York, May 24, 1968

Setting The Stage: After two middleweight title reigns, Nigerian great Tiger moved up and won the light heavyweight crown at age 37 and made two successful defenses before meeting Foster at Madison Square Garden. The challenger was in his prime at age 30 and clearly at his best as a 175-pounder fighting other 175-pounders—his four previous losses had all come against opponents who were over the light heavy limit. Was this a superfight at the time? Not really, just a solid MSG-worthy title defense for an aging star. But it's a superfight in retrospect, two Hall of Fame champions meeting in a crossroads fight for the ages.

The New York crowd booed Foster and gave Tiger a rousing ovation during the introductions. As referee Mark Conn offered final instructions, the height difference separating the 6'3" challenger and the 5'8" champ was alarming. The two-way action was outstanding from the outset as Tiger was able to get past the Foster jab and move inside with regularity, landing heavy shots whenever he got into range. Foster used his jab effectively in spots, but there were other times when he crouched down and took away his own height advantage. Only late in the third round, when he consistently worked behind the jab and pumped out effective one-twos, did Foster start to take control of the fight.

The Knockout Punch: The fourth round was named Round of the Year by THE RING, thanks largely to the final punch. Both fighters were loading up with powershots all round—and often missing wildly, leading broadcaster Don Dunphy to ask after Tiger uncorked a shot that Foster ducked, "How can you miss a punch over Foster's head?" In the end, Foster let loose with a determined three-punch combination that produced a one-punch knockout because only one punch landed. A ferocious left missed by a foot. Then a nasty right just barely missed. But Foster kept swinging, coming back one last time with a form-perfect left hook that absolutely annihilated Tiger's sturdy chin.

The Effect: Tiger, who hadn't been kayoed in 15 years, fell like an imploded building, his entire body dropping straight down, almost to a sitting position. Then his upper body sprung backward, and Tiger banged his head on the canvas, sealing the deal. He was flat on his back and could do no more than will himself about halfway to a seated position before the count of 10 was reached. Foster leapt up and down in celebration, going from 6'3" to about 8'3" after becoming light heavyweight champion of the world.



5 HASIM RAHMAN KO 5 LENNOX LEWIS
Carnival City, South Africa, April 22, 2001

Setting The Stage: Coming off a victory over Evander Holyfield to unify the heavyweight championship and dominant defenses against top young contenders Michael Grant and David Tua, Lewis was in complete control of the division, nearing an aura of invincibility. And he was apparently buying into his own invincibility. Favored up to 20-1 to defeat Rahman—a respected contender but one thought to be nowhere near Lewis' class—the 35-year-old champ was more focused on filming a scene for *Ocean's Eleven* than on the business at hand and weighed in at a career-high 253½ pounds. Some in the boxing community smelled the potential for a massive upset. But most still felt "The Rock" had no chance, regardless.

For four rounds, the fight was moving along somewhere in between the two extremes. Rahman was reasonably competitive, winning one round on each of the judges' scorecards, but Lewis was generally controlling the action and landing the more effective punches. But the towering Brit was tiring. Having given himself less than two weeks to adapt to the altitude in South Africa, he was breathing heavily by the end of round two. Blood was seeping into Rahman's left eye in the fourth, and it was causing him vision problems. But the challenger remained determined. Midway through the fifth, he landed his best punch to that point, a chopping right hand to Lewis' chin. It wasn't the last right to Lewis' chin that he would land.

The Knockout Punch: After Rahman backed Lewis across the ring with a series of jabs that fell short, the champ offered a goofy smile. The challenger, in return, offered one of the most famous punches in boxing history. After a shoulder feint caused Lewis to flinch and turn to the side, The Rock sprung up with a beautiful straight right hand that threaded between Lewis' upraised gloves and connected right on the button, all of his 238 pounds behind it.

The Effect: Shock filled the boxing world as Lewis plummeted to the canvas and banged his head on the mat. He began to sit up, then rolled over onto his knees, which was as far as he could get before referee Daniel van de Wiele completed his 10-count. Buster Douglas' upset of Mike Tyson was more unexpected. Maybe you could say the same for Leon Spinks' win over Muhammad Ali or Jim Braddock's win over Max Baer. But never has boxing seen an upset of this magnitude that came from a single, thunderous punch.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

4 JULIAN JACKSON KO 4 HEROL GRAHAM
Benalmadena, Spain, November 24, 1990

Setting The Stage: It was a matchup of one of boxing's best pure punchers and one of the sport's best pure boxers. Jackson would be named the 25th greatest puncher of all-time by THE RING in 2003 and already had to his credit a knockout that just barely missed inclusion on this one-punch kayo list, his second-round dusting of Terry Norris a year earlier. Graham, meanwhile, was a crafty and slick British southpaw who could certainly pop but was better known for his speed and defense. They were competing for a vacant middleweight alphabet belt, with Jackson moving up after a dominant run at 154 pounds and Graham engaging in his second 160-pound title try after losing a split decision to Mike McCallum the year before.

For three rounds, the boxer ruled the day. Graham was quicker and consistently got off first, and, by the end of the second round, Jackson's left eye was swelling shut. Bothered by the eye and desperate to turn things around, the banger from the Virgin Islands switched to a southpaw stance in the third, but he still wasn't having success. Graham calmly picked him off with counter right hooks as Jackson tried to get close, and, between the third and fourth rounds, the ringside doctor was called in to determine whether Jackson's eye damage warranted a stoppage. He allowed "The Hawk" out for round four, and Jackson proceeded to load up on right hands, knowing he had a limited amount of time with which to work. But Graham was too slippery, and Jackson couldn't quite land anything—at least not for the first minute of the round.

The Knockout Punch: His confidence soaring, Graham had Jackson pinned in a corner and landed a left hand. But as he twisted his body to follow up with a right hook, he left his chin dangling in the air. Jackson saw the opening and swung over top with a smashing right to the jaw, erasing a shutout on all three cards with one sledgehammer blast.

The Effect: Graham was twisting into the punch, but Jackson's right hand reversed his momentum, rendered him instantly unconscious, and laid him out flat on his back. Graham's left glove was draped over his stomach, while his right arm was extended out to the side, and he didn't budge during referee Joe Cortez' count. Graham's cornermen were still trying to revive him three minutes later, and, finally, they were able to lift him up in stages. He seemed so close to a stoppage victory and his first major title belt, but all it took was one mistake—especially against an all-time great puncher like Jackson.

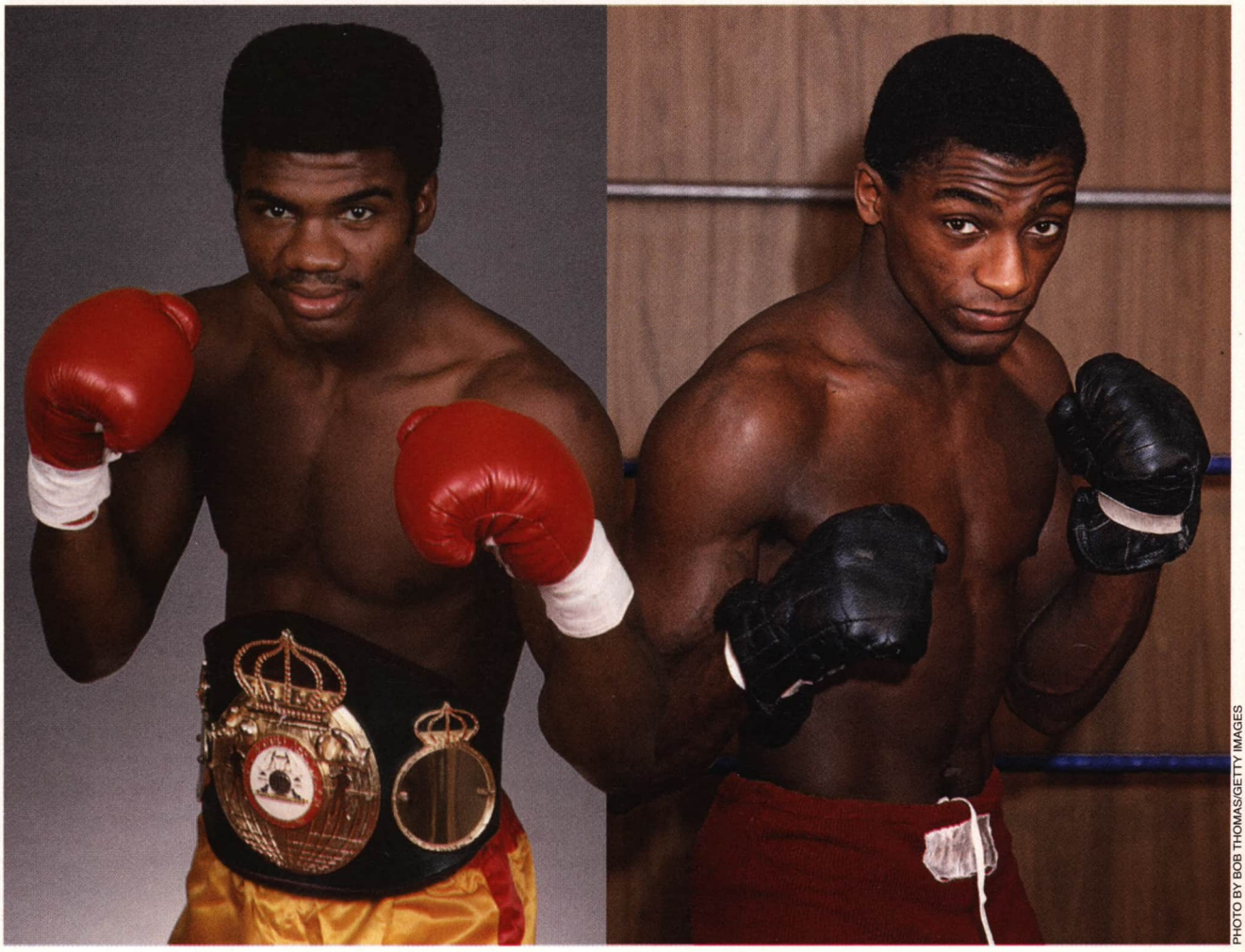


PHOTO BY BOB THOMAS/GETTY IMAGES

3 MIKE WEAVER KO 15 JOHN TATE
Knoxville, Tennessee, March 31, 1980

Setting The Stage: In the relatively early days of multiple sanctioning bodies, Muhammad Ali was retired but still technically the lineal heavyweight champ, Larry Holmes had a belt and was generally recognized as the number-one heavyweight, and Tate had a belt of his own but a lot to prove. After some unimpressive performances early in his career, Tate came on strong in 1979, defeating Duane Bobick, Kallie Knoetze, and Gerrie Coetzee in succession. If he could get through this seemingly straightforward ABC-televised first title defense against Weaver, a journeyman with nine losses but who had recently given Holmes a stiff challenge, "Big John" was potentially in line for a fight with a comebacking Ali and all the riches that came with it.

For the first 11 rounds, everything was on track for the 25-year-old Tate to land that opportunity. He'd lost a few rounds but was comfortably ahead. He began to tire, however, in round 12, and his footwork decreased significantly. Still, entering the 15th round, Tate was up by three, three, and five points on the cards. Weaver knew he needed a knockout and let his hands go all round while Tate did his share of holding. The titleholder was exhausted, but he knew if he could just stay on his feet, the fight was his.

The Knockout Punch: Tate had his back to the ropes and was following the correct strategy—hold, hold, and then hold some more. But Weaver pushed his way out of the clinch, and, before Tate could grab him again, "Hercules" struck with a left hook befitting his nickname with just under a minute to go in the fight. Tate was out on his feet, but his body couldn't fall fast enough to prevent Weaver from drilling him with a hard right hand. It didn't make a difference, though. This was a pure one-punch knockout where that one punch just happened not to be the final punch landed.

The Effect: All 232 pounds of Big John collapsed to the canvas, his face leading the way, and he didn't move during referee Ernesto Magana's count. With just 45 seconds left on the clock, Tate had lost everything—his undefeated record, his title, his date with Ali. And Weaver was suddenly much more than just a journeyman. Maybe he hadn't claimed the *real* heavyweight championship of the world, but he'd still produced perhaps the most dramatic final-round turnaround in boxing history.

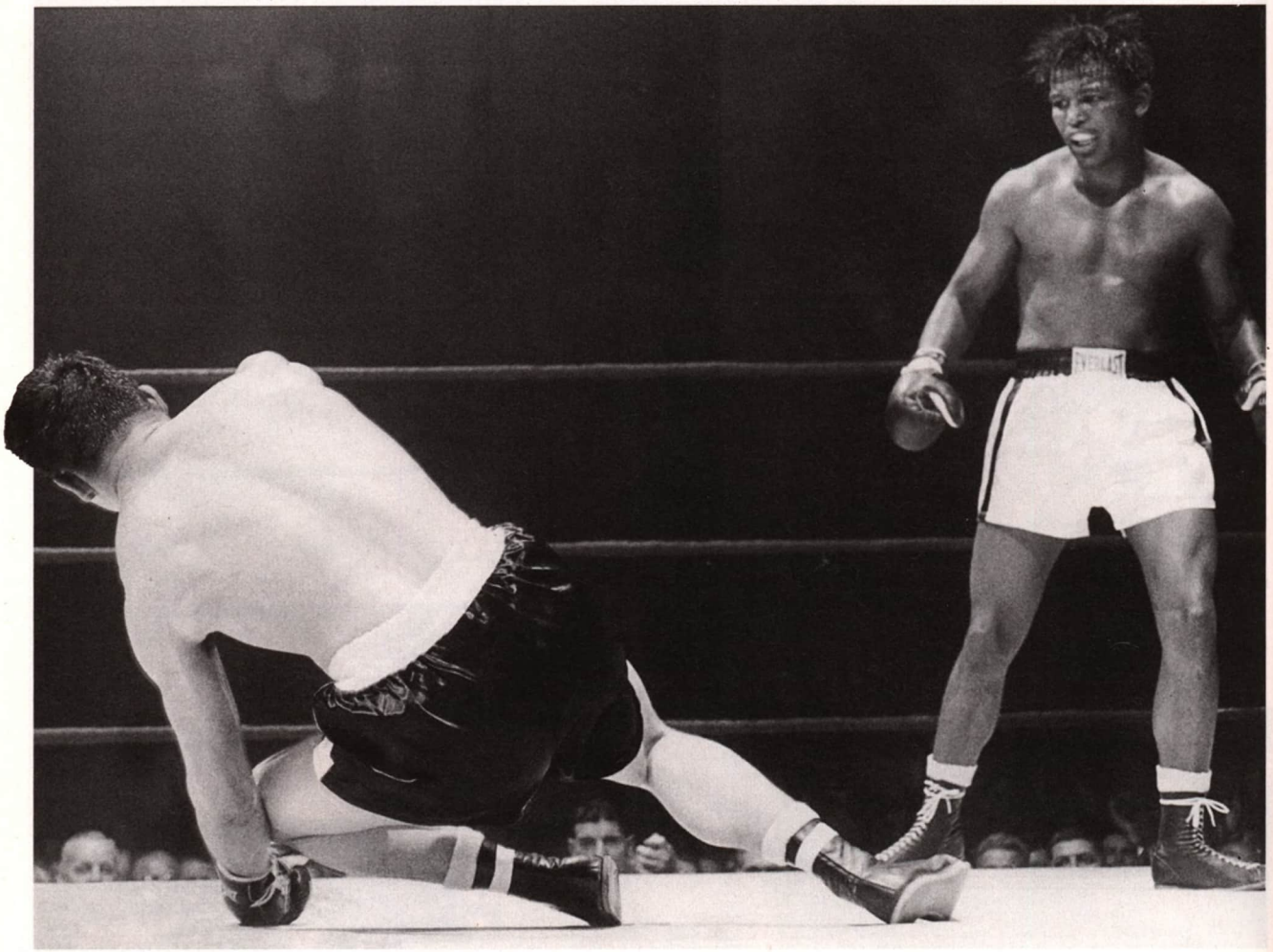
2 SUGAR RAY ROBINSON KO 5 GENE FULLMER
Chicago, Illinois, May 1, 1957

Setting The Stage: The great Robinson was in the heart of the second phase of his career—no longer the dominant force he had been throughout his 20s and early 30s, but still one of the best fighters around and, depending on the day of the week, possibly the world's best middleweight. Four months earlier, his third middleweight title reign ended on a unanimous decision to Fullmer, a monumentally tough and awkward brawler 10 years his junior. In the rematch at Chicago Stadium, the 35-year-old Robinson sought to become a four-time 160-pound champ while Fullmer sought history of his own: He was trying to become the first man to beat the legendary Sugar Ray twice.

Fullmer focused almost exclusively on the body in the early going and received a stern warning from referee Frank Sikora for a third-round low blow. In general, Robinson-Fullmer II was an ugly fight—which means things were going more or less according to plan for the champion from Utah. In the fifth, whenever the fighters weren't locked in a clinch, you could see Robinson trying to time Fullmer for a big counter shot, but the champ was lunging in so unpredictably that Sugar Ray just couldn't get off effectively.

The Knockout Punch: About 75 seconds into the fifth round, Robinson did something very intelligent given his difficulty timing Fullmer: He went to the body, landing two good right hands to the ribs. That brought Fullmer's guard down, and, as the defending champ lunged in once more, Robinson finally timed him perfectly with a left hook. The punch is marveled over to this day in part because Robinson wasn't even stepping into the shot; he just twisted his upper body perfectly, connected with Fullmer's jaw, and proved the old adage that the power is the last thing to go.

The Effect: Fullmer went down on his back, rolled over immediately, and spent the next 10 seconds almost comically trying to rise. He got to one foot and one knee, then collapsed on the side of his head, his heart willing but his nervous system completely discombobulated. Fullmer later said that, when he came to, he saw Robinson jumping up and down in the corner, and he asked his manager, "How come Robinson is doing exercises between rounds?" That pretty well sums up the effect of the punch. And the fact that it had that effect on an iron-chinned tough guy like Fullmer is part of what makes it so amazing. The boxing world never witnessed a one-punch knockout of Jake LaMotta; this was the next closest thing.



1 ROCKY MARCIANO KO 13 JERSEY JOE WALCOTT
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, September 23, 1952

Setting The Stage: Marciano and Walcott are recalled now as heavyweight legends, but, at the time, they were a pair of somewhat unlikely combatants for the crown. Jersey Joe was 38 years old and had amazingly captured the title a year earlier in his fifth attempt. Marciano was regarded as crude and undersized, and few would have imagined he'd make it through 42 fights undefeated. Still, the heavyweight championship was on the line, and both fighters were capable of providing action, so a crowd of more than 40,000 were on hand at Municipal Stadium.

Walcott dropped Marciano with an outstanding left hook in the opening round and proceeded to stagger "The Rock" several other times in the early going. But Marciano always responded with two-fisted fire, producing one thrilling exchange after another. The ninth round was sensational, with the two warriors trading powershots with their hands at their sides, and the 11th featured similar two-way action.

The Knockout Punch: THE RING named Marciano-Walcott the Fight of the Year, and, despite it lasting a measly 43 seconds, round 13 was named Round of the Year. Had the Knockout of the Year award existed at the time, it surely would have captured that too. Walcott led on all three cards, by two, three, and four points, so the challenger needed to make something happen. Just over 30 seconds into the round, Walcott backed up to the ropes and cocked his right arm, but he never got to throw the punch. Standing right in front of him, Marciano uncorked a straight right of his own that traveled only about six inches before colliding with the side of Walcott's jaw. A left hook followed a half-second later, but, by then, Rocky could have clubbed Walcott over the head with a lead pipe and Jersey Joe wouldn't have felt a thing.

The Effect: Walcott got hung up on the ropes for a couple of seconds, his left arm draped over the middle strand while his rear sat on the bottom rope. Then he slowly sunk to the canvas, head first, with his left arm now curled around the bottom rope, and there he stayed on his knees and his forehead, unconscious for the remainder of ref Charlie Daggert's count. This knockout had everything. The kayo blast offered come-from-behind drama, the punch was as perfect a right hand as has ever been delivered, and the aesthetics of the victim's collapse were incomparable. Oh, and it's hard to top from a historical perspective, as this single shot made the heavyweight title change hands and made the legendary figure "49-0" possible. ■

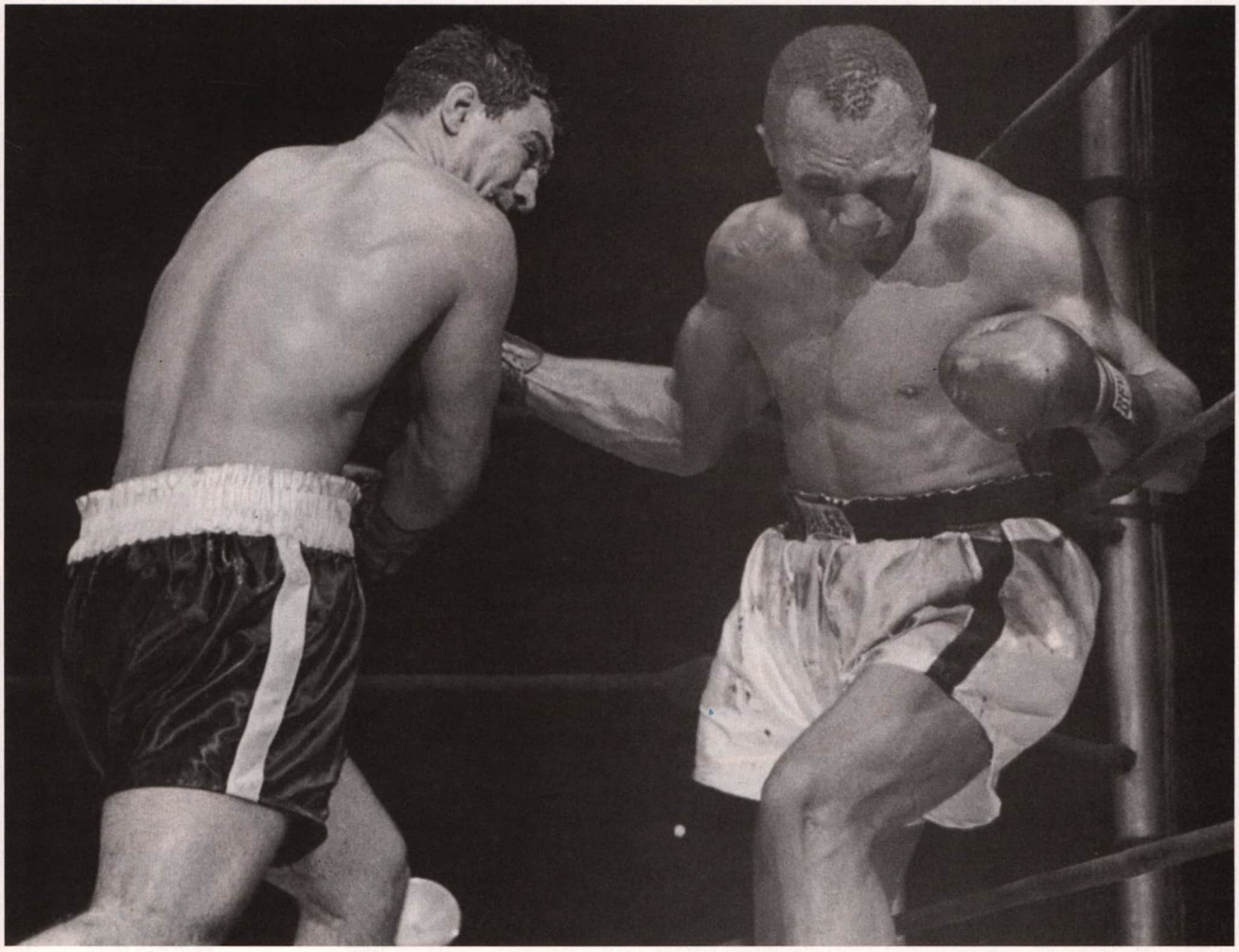


PHOTO BY IAN MACNICOL/GETTY IMAGES
WORLD CHAMPION
WBO
HOME

RICKY BURNS

Scottish Junior Lightweight Gunning For The Ring Championship

By Gavin Evans

Take a look at Ricky Burns when he steps through the ropes—the 'who are you looking at?' stare, the number one haircut, the ripped 5'10" body covered with tattoos—and you might be tempted to think you're looking at the archetypical Glaswegian hardman.

This is a city that has produced its fair share of heavy-drinking, street-fighting nutters—from Benny Lynch to Scott Harrison—and it is a part of the country with the lowest life expectancy in Britain and the highest rate of alcoholism.

Having grown up in the Coatbridge, a working-class feeder town on the outskirts of Glasgow, you might think that this unforgiving city would have left some of its harsher marks on the WBO super-featherweight titlist, but somehow he managed to avoid all this.

Speaking to The Ring, he comes across as impeccably polite in a quietly enthusiastic kind of way. He's very much a family man whose life revolves around his fiancée, Amanda, his close-knit family, his dog and his Xbox (to which he often devotes several hours of the day). He barely drinks (and admits he can't hold it), never goes clubbing, and says he has never had a street fight in his life.

But now that his slow-burning boxing career has finally taken off, he is allowing himself to think beyond hearth and home. Having tasted title-winning success, he wants more. Specifically, he wants The Ring championship belt and is throwing his all into a campaign to seize it.

"I always read The Ring, and I noticed that I was rated number two and that number one was Mzonke Fana, the IBF champion. So that meant that if I fought and beat Fana, I would not only become a double title holder, but also the world champion and the holder of The Ring belt, which would be a dream come true for me."

He went on to explain that his attraction to The Ring belt started when he saw *The Rocky* films as a child. "I noticed that was the belt that Rocky wore into the ring and so I decided that's the belt I wanted."

Ricky has been pestering his promoter, Frank Warrren, to secure him a unification bout with the 37-year-old Fana. "It's looking good," he said. "The Fana camp are very interested and have said that all Frank has to do is give them a call."

Go back a year or so and the idea of Burns being in with a shot of becoming a unified world champion, even in boxing's weakest division, would have seemed ludicrous. He was then Britain's second string super feather, hoping for a shot at the number one man, Kevin Mitchell, who was in line to challenge the big-hitting Puerto Rican Ricardo Martinez for the WBO title.

But Mitchell outgrew the division (and instead got blasted away by Michael Katsidis). Warren's close connections with the WBO meant that Burns was given the much-postponed gig. Despite his hometown advantage, few gave the Scotsman much hope. After all, he had twice failed in bids for the British title and had only fought once in the previous 15 months. What chance did he have against the unbeaten Martinez, who

was making the third defense of a title he won from London's Nicky Cook?

In the opening round, the answer to that question seemed to be the obvious one. Martinez dropped Burns with a heavy right and looked like he would probably finish him off in the next round.

Instead, Burns stuck to the script—moving, jabbing, throwing quick combinations, and digging away to the body—while Martinez did far more missing than connecting.

"I think after he dropped me he underestimated me and thought he was in for an easy fight and that he could just go and knock me out in the next round. But I've always had a very good chin, and, anyway, fortunately I was moving back when he caught me in the first round, so I recovered quickly."

Burns, who looked at least a division bigger than Martinez, even began outmuscling him, fighting effectively up close as well as at long range. Every now and then, Martinez would land a haymaker, Burns' legs would shudder, and the Puerto Rican would assume this was his moment. He would pile in, tire himself out, and the Scotsman would eventually start punching back—throwing more and landing far more.

This pattern continued throughout the fight, and, by the 12th round, Martinez was too exhausted to do much more damage. Burns emerged as the surprise new titleholder by margins of 115-112 (twice) and 115-113.

He has since made two lowgrade defenses—against the 13-1 Norwegian featherweight Andreas Evensen (widely outpointed) and the 14-4 Ghanaian Joseph Laryea (stopped in seven relatively one-sided rounds after suffering a hand injury).

Burns says he is a boxer who tends to up his game against better opponents, and he readily admits he was slightly below par in both of these defenses, although he was really coming on when the Laryea fight ended prematurely. "He was looking at his corner and looking for a way out. I know he said he injured his hand, and it could be true. But he used it as an excuse. I would have stopped him."

He knows he will have to be at his best against the 30-4 (12) Fana, who is on his second reign as IBF titleholder. "Despite his age, he looked very sharp in his last fight against Cassius Baloyi, and he's probably at his peak right now. But I think it is definitely a winnable fight for me—a hard fight, yes, but one that I think I could pull off. I'd be very confident of beating him."

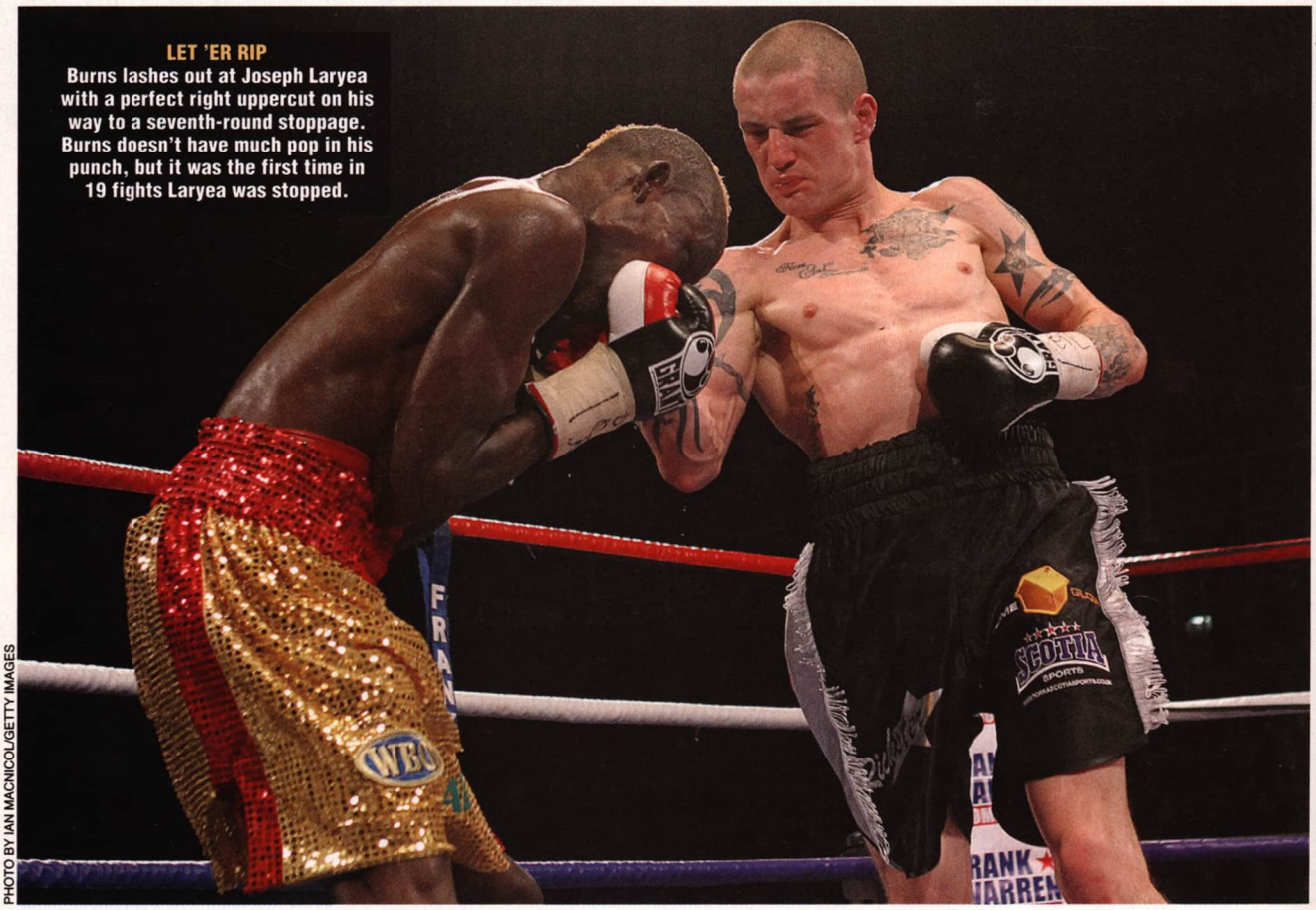
Burns, who turned 28 in April, has been a professional for nearly a decade and has been boxing continuously for 16 years.

He was raised as the oldest of five children (two brothers, two sisters) whose father was a taxi driver and mother a care worker. His brothers found their way to the Barn Boxing Club, and, the next day, Ricky and a few of his mates followed them. He immediately decided that "this was all I wanted to do with my life."

He developed a close relationship with his trainer, Rab Bannon, and soon emerged as a fleet-footed, defensive boxer. He says he had 110 amateur fights, winning 103 of them. Along the way, he won five Scottish titles and two Gaelic gold medals.

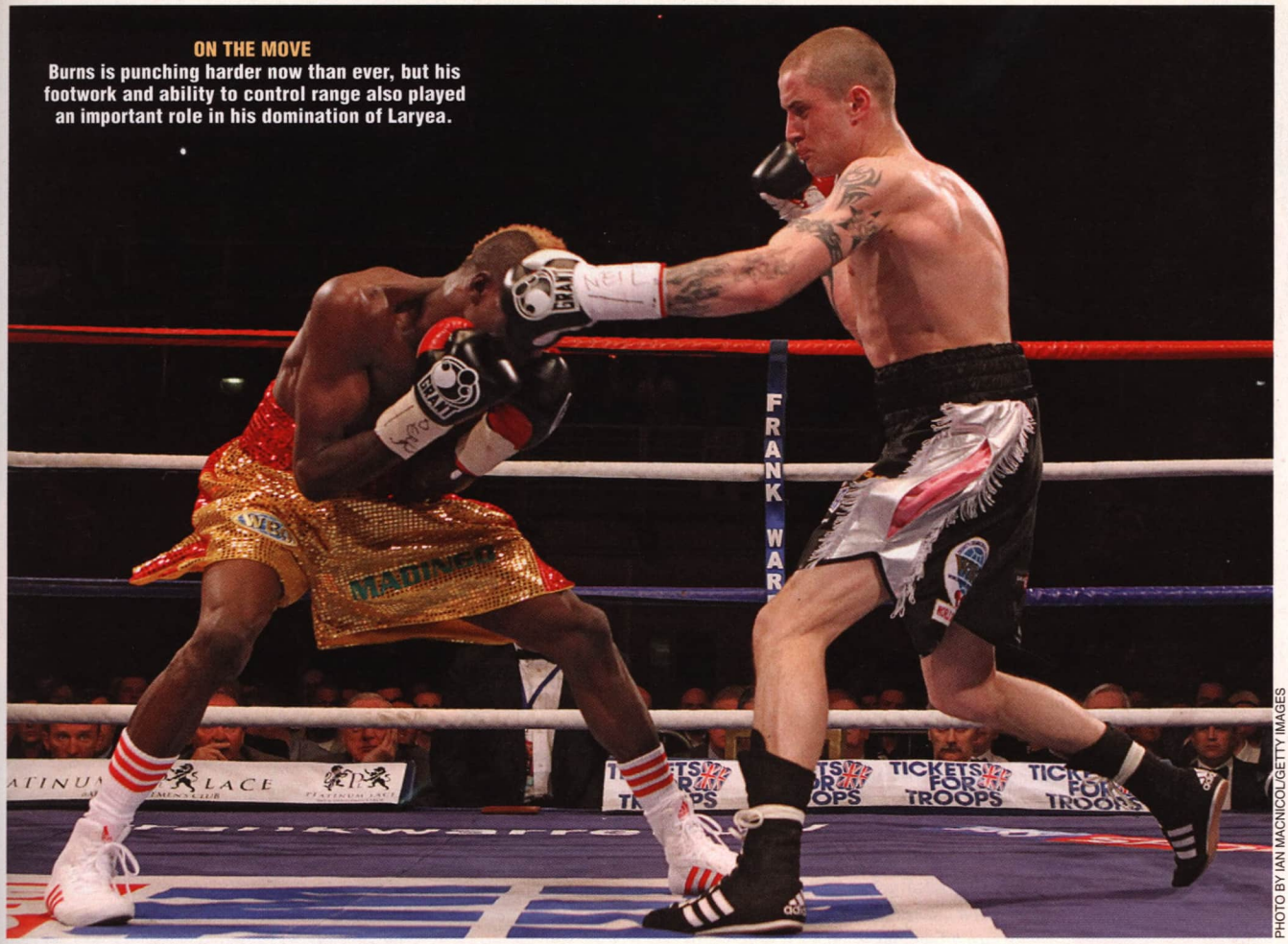
At the age of 16, he left school, completed an apprenticeship as a mechanic, and then turned professional while continuing to work at the day job. As a senior amateur he had boxed at junior welterweight, and his professional debut, in October 2001, was at welterweight, although most of his early fights were at 140-pounds.

The change came after a long layoff, which prompted him to give up his job as a mechanic and dedicate his life to professional boxing. "It was just too hard doing both. I would work a full day and then go to the gym



LET 'ER RIP
Burns lashes out at Joseph Laryea with a perfect right uppercut on his way to a seventh-round stoppage. Burns doesn't have much pop in his punch, but it was the first time in 19 fights Laryea was stopped.

PHOTO BY IAN MACNICOL/GETTY IMAGES



ON THE MOVE
Burns is punching harder now than ever, but his footwork and ability to control range also played an important role in his domination of Laryea.

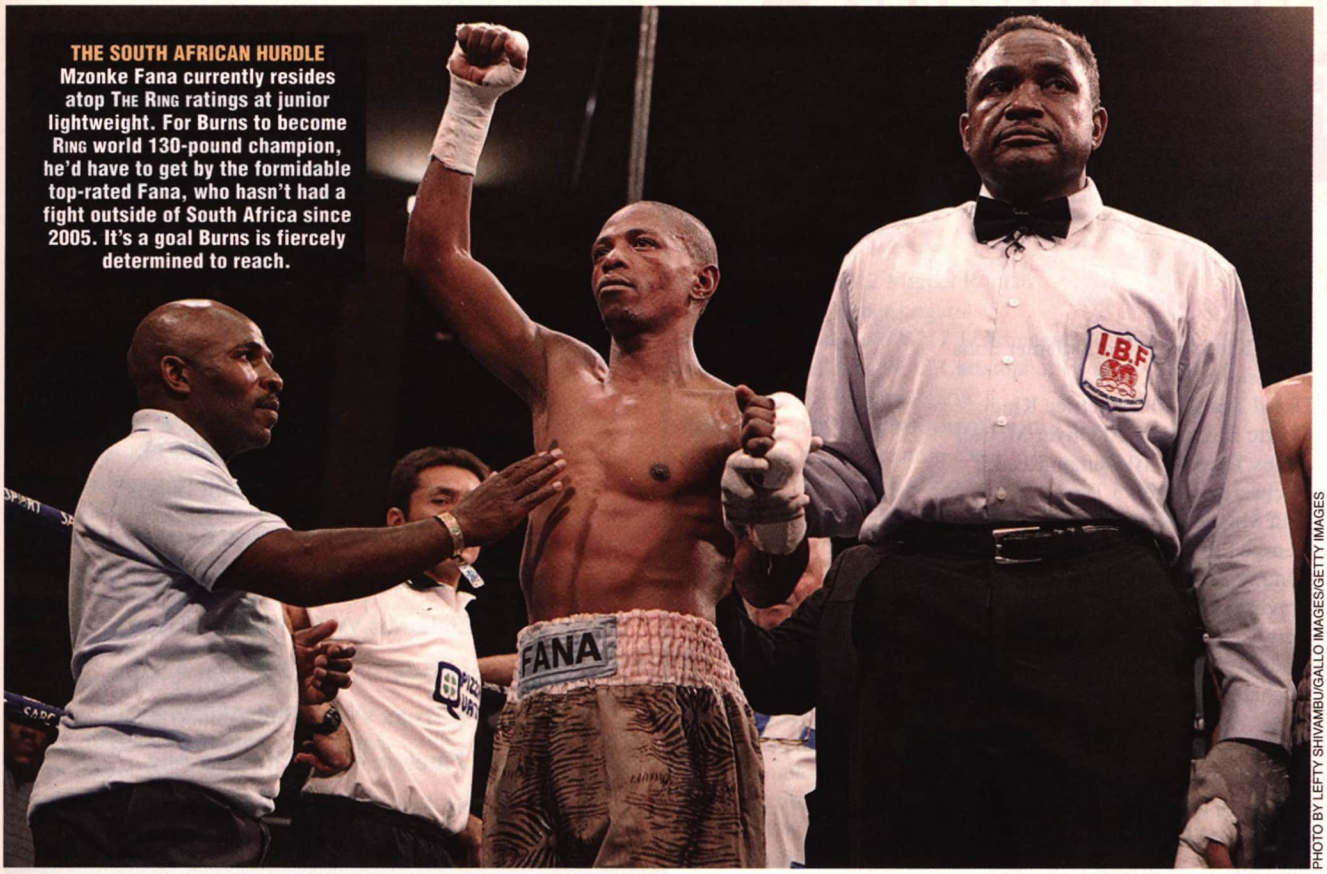
PHOTO BY IAN MACNICOL/GETTY IMAGES

ZONING IN
Burns attacks Andreas Evensen, who had stopped his previous four-straight opponents until he met with Burns. The Scot promptly dropped Evensen in the first round before going off to a unanimous 12-round decision.

PHOTO BY JEFF J. MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

WHO'S FATTY?
At one time, "Prince" Naseem Hamed was on top of the boxing world, now he appears as a bulbous, inflated version of his former self. Burns could take a few self-marketing tips from the flamboyant former featherweight titlist.

PHOTO BY JEFF J. MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES



THE SOUTH AFRICAN HURDLE
Mzonke Fana currently resides atop The Ring ratings at junior lightweight. For Burns to become Ring world 130-pound champion, he'd have to get by the formidable top-rated Fana, who hasn't had a fight outside of South Africa since 2005. It's a goal Burns is fiercely determined to reach.

PHOTO BY LEFTY SHIVAMBU/GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

and I would be too exhausted to train as hard as I should."

Once he became a full-time professional, the additional training meant he lost weight (from 144½-pounds on his debut to 127-pounds in his seventh bout). "People say I'm very big for the weight, but, since then, I have had no trouble making super feather. I never really stop training—maybe a week or so after each fight—and I walk around at 140-pounds, so it's no trouble getting down to 130."

After just nine fights, he was thrown in with the unbeaten British lightweight champion, Graham Earl, and pulled off a surprise victory, losing only one of the eight rounds. "He was 22-0 and a division heavier than me, so nobody expected me to beat him. But I was used to his style from my amateur days and just went in and out, making him miss."

After three more wins, the 22-year-old was thrown into an even bigger challenge: against the world rated British, European and Commonwealth junior lightweight titleholder, Alex Arthur. Burns put up a courageous fight but lost a clear-cut, unanimous decision. Afterwards, Arthur commented: "He's a brilliant boxer with a great future, and he could be a world champion one day."

Burns shrugged off the defeat and said it was a "great experience." Today, he admits he jumped the gun. "I'd only had 13 fights and it was too soon for me—I was just too inexperienced," he said.

His second shot at the title came a year later against the powerful Carl Johanneson and this time he was dropped three times before losing a fairly wide points verdict. On reflection, he says he should have pulled out of the fight. "Look, I'm not one to make excuses, but I really did have a very bad stomach bug. At the weigh-in, I felt terrible and I had severe diarrhea. But I had a lot of fans who went to Leeds for the fight, and I didn't want to disappoint them so I went ahead with it. If I knew then what I know now, I would have pulled out."

That defeat prompted him to make what proved to be a crucial decision in his career: He broke with his old amateur trainer, Rab Bannan, and moved to Billy Nelson's Glasgow gym. "It was a nightmare having to tell Rab because we had been together for so long, but we left on good terms."

Nelson turned him into a more aggressive boxer, and the results were soon apparent. "He got me to sit down on my punches. I'm still not a one-punch knockout artist, but I am definitely hitting a lot harder than before."

Three years ago, Burns got his next chance to move up the ladder, outpointing Ghana's Osumanu Akaba for the Commonwealth title, which he defended three times, including a seventh-round victory over the big-hitting former British champion Michael Gomez, who, a few months earlier, had dropped Amir Khan.

But most of his fights in this period were at lightweight, and he says he can see himself becoming a world champion at two weights.

"My aim is to win The Ring world title belt, defend it a few times, and then move up to lightweight and win a world title there."

But whatever he wins will not change his everyday life. "I hardly drink at all—a couple of beers a few days after a fight and that's all I can handle," he says. "I've always been the quiet one. I've kept to myself, and I am still like that. When I win a fight, I first go and see my mum, then I go home and watch the recording of the fight on the telly, and then I play with my Xbox."

He says he plans to marry Amanda in 2012, but, beyond the acquisition of more tattoos and the attainment of higher levels on his Xbox games, he draws a blank when asked about life beyond the ring. "I'm never really out of training, so I am always in shape," he says, suggesting that he could have a long career. "I guess I will continue boxing for as long I am capable of performing at the top level. I can't really think in terms of retirement when I have so much still to achieve." ■

WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

Heavyweights

Vitali Klitschko KO 1 Odlanier Solis
(Retains WBC Title)
David Tua W 10 Demetrice King
Cedric Boswell W 10 Oliver McCall
James Toney W 10 Damon Reed
Michael Grant KO 3 Tye Fields
Seth Mitchell KO 2 Charles Davis
George Foreman KO 1 Chris Jones
Tommy Zbikowski KO 1 Richard Bryant
Travis Walker W 8 Darnell Wilson
Bert Cooper W 6 Gabe Brown
Andy Ruiz Jr. W 6 Alvaro Morales
Michael Sprott W 4 Serdar Uysal

Cruiserweights

Pawel Kolodziej W 12 Felix Cora Jr.
Rachid El Hadak W 12 Levan Jomardashvili
Ola Afolabi KO 5 Lubos Suda
Ian Tims W 10 Michael Sweeney
Nuri Seferi W 8 Jozsef Nagy
Mateusz Masternak KO 5 Ali Ismailov

Light Heavyweights

Yusaf Mack W 12 Otis Griffin
James DeGale KO 5 Alpay Kobal
Roman Simakov W 12 Douglas Otieno
Tomas Kovacs W 12 Hamza Wandera
Sofiane Sebihi KO 11 Vigan Mustafa
Junior Moar W 10 Michael Walchuk

Middleweights

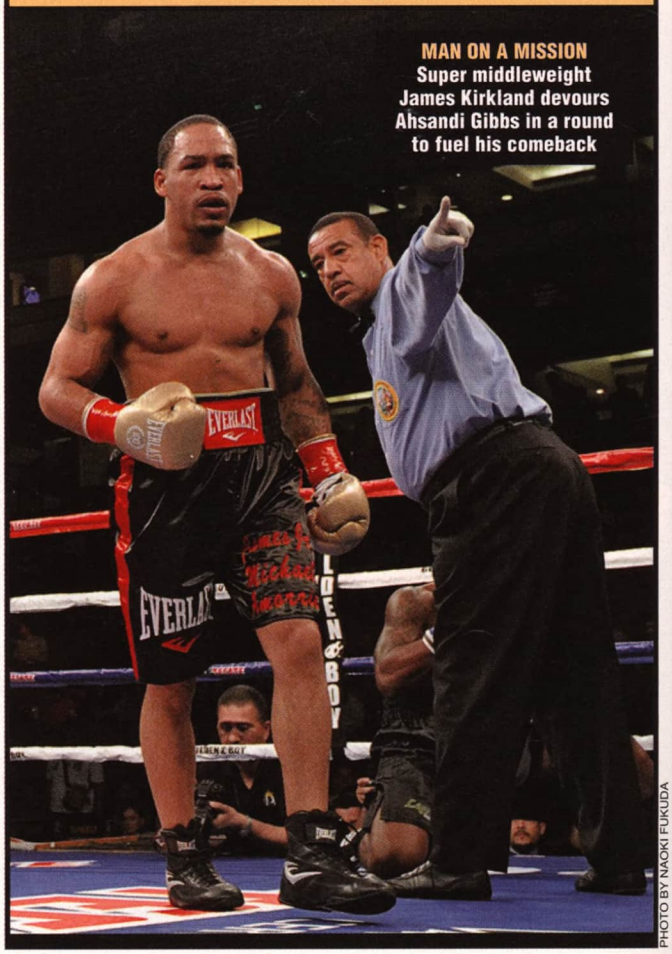
Sergio Martinez KO 8 Sergiy Dzinziruk
(Retains World Title)
Andy Lee KO 10 Craig McEwan
Avtandil Khurtsidze W 12 Mariusz Cendrowski
Robbie Bryant W 12 Togasilimai Letoa
Aryee Ayittey W 12 Mohammed Akrong
Gaston Vega W 10 Luis Arrieta
Domenic Von Chrzanowski W 10 Christian Pohle
Anthony Fitzgerald KO 5 Affif Belghecham
Vanes Martirosyan KO 2 Bladimir Hernandez
Matt Korobov KO 1 Michael Walker
Tarvis Simms W 8 John Mackey

Junior Middleweights

Miguel Cotto KO 12 Ricardo Mayorga
(Retains WBA Title)
Saul Alvarez W 12 Matthew Hatton
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Pawel Wolak KO 6 Yuri Foreman
David Lopez W 12 Michel Rosales

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Lucian Bute KO 10 Brian Magee
(Retains IBF Title)
Jesus Gonzales W 10 Dhafir Smith
Willbeforce Shihepo Tech. Win 9 Donald Kampamba
Maselino Masoe KO 4 Kashif Mumtaz
James Kirkland KO 2 Jhon Berrio
James Kirkland KO 1 Ahsandi Gibbs
Daniel Jacobs KO 1 Robert Kliewer
Piotr Wilczewski KO 11 Amin Asikainen
Isaac Chilemba W 10 Maxim Vlasov
Ezequiel Maderna W 10 Ruben Acosta
Caleb Truax W 10 Phil Williams
Said Mbelwa KO 5 Mbwana Ally
Robin Reid W 4 Jamie Ambler



MAN ON A MISSION
Super middleweight James Kirkland devours Ahsandi Gibbs in a round to fuel his comeback

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Salim Larbi W 12 David Makaradze
Lenny Bottai W 12 Sergei Melis
Gabriel Rosado KO 12 Jamaal Davis
Pavel Mamontov W 10 Robert Dasoyan
Cedric Vitu W 10 Mehdi Nekaies
Jamie Ball KO 8 A.A Lowe
Dmitry Mikhaylenko KO 8 Alexey Glukhov
Harry Joe Yorgey KO 5 Donovan Castaneda

Welterweights

Rafal Jackiewicz KO 2 Tarik Sahibeddine
Brad Solomon W 10 Demetrius Hopkins
Adil Anwar KO 10 Nathan Graham
Joel Casamayor W 10 Miguel Leyva
Ray Narh W 10 Freddie Norwood
Jackson Bonsu W 10 Jose Del Rio
Anthony Lenk KO 6 Terry Buterbaugh
Stefan Worth W 8 Ferenc Zold

Junior Welterweights

Zab Judah KO 7 Kaizer Mabuza
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Humberto Soto W 10 Fidel Monterrosa
Viktor Postol W 10 Sam Rukundo
Jose Lopez W 12 Jhonny Navarrete
Lee McAllister KO 6 Istvan Nagy
Armando Robles W 12 Javier Hernandez
Dave Ryan W 10 Leonard Lothian
Pablo Munguia W 10 Jesus Gurrola
Ricardo Dominguez W 10 Luis Arceo
Darren Hamilton KO 8 Peter McDonagh
Jesus Pabon KO 1 Americo Santos
Michael Stewart D 10 David Torres
Danny Garcia KO 2 John Figueroa

Lightweights

Miguel Vazquez W 12 Leonardo Zappavigna
(Retains IBF Title)
Brandon Rios KO 10 Miguel Acosta
Paulus Moses KO 1 Miguel Lombardo
Geir Jorgensen W 12 Tommi Schmidt
Oliver Flores W 12 Daniel Hernandez
Julius Indongo W 10 Samuel Kapapu
Mason Menard W 10 Anthony Napunyi
Antonio DeMarco W 12 Reyes Sanchez
Dejan Zlaticanin W 12 Felix Lora
Vicente Escobedo W 10 Walter Estrada
Sergio Thompson W 10 Uriel Barrera
Juan Pablo Sanchez W 10 Rodolfo Lopez
Daniel Estrada Tech Win 7 Arturo Gomez
Jaime Barcelona KO 5 Kevin Dela Cruz

Junior Lightweights

Ricky Burns KO 7 Joseph Laryea
Adrien Broner W 10 Daniel Ponce De Leon
Gary Sykes W 12 Carl Johanneson
Juan Carlos Burgos KO 2 Frankie Archuleta
Eduardo Lazcano W 12 Alejandro Barrera
Ermano Fegatilli W 12 Stephen Foster
Sergio Torres W 11 Marlon Aguilar
Liam Walsh KO 10 Jon Kays
Fahsai Sakkreerin KO 8 Julio de la Basez
Robert Marroquin W 8 Gilberto Sanchez Leon

Featherweights

Jonathan Barros W 12 Miguel Roman
Jun Talape W 12 Elmer Legaria
Chonlatarn Piriyapinyo W 12 TI Yamagata Aguelo
Robinson Castellanos W 12 Christopher Perez
Jun Talape W 12 Elmer Legaria
Alberto Servidei W 10 Massimo Morra
Carlos Yanez KO 10 Ricardo Castillo
Leonard Guardiano W 10 Jason Egera
Javier Fortuna KO 8 Derrick Wilson
James Ancliff KO 5 Jason Hastie
Joel Brunker KO 4 Marangin Marbun
Vyacheslav Gusev KO 3 Feliciano Ledesma

Junior Featherweights

Guillermo Rigondeaux KO 1 Willie Casey
Jose Carlos Vargas W 10 Cecilio Santos
Yan Barthelemy W 10 Francis Ruiz
Jerome Thomas W 10 Yoan Boyeaux
Themba Lesiba KO 2 Sabelo Nokhele
Jesus Rojas W 6 Isaac Hidalgo
Randy Caballero W 6 Hugo Ramos

Bantamweights

Glenn Porras W 12 Richard Pumicpic
Juan Rosas W 10 Jesus Vazquez
AJ Banal KO 2 Francis Miyeyusho
Jesus Ruiz W 12 Angel Aguilar
JR Edurot KO 2 Erwin Jamlan
Craig Lyon Tech. Draw 3 Josh Wale
Simpiwe Vetyeka KO 3 Roberto Carlos Leyva

Junior Bantamweights

Milan Melindo KO 1 Rosendo Vega
Oscar Ibarra KO 4 Ariel Humberto Alassia
Dado Cabintoy KO 2 Julius Agcopra

Flyweights

Julio Cesar Miranda KO 4 Arden Diale
Wilbert Uicab W 12 Edwin Diaz
Arthur Villanueva KO 1 Samuel Apuya
Randy Petalcorin KO 5 Rogen Flores
Arely Mucino W 10 Carolina Alvarez

Junior Flyweights

Gilberto Keb Baas KO 9 Jose Antonio Aguirre
(Retains WBC Title)
Roman Gonzalez W 12 Manuel Vargas
Yodmongkol Wor Saengthep W 10 Lionel Duran
Kompayak Porpramook Tech. Win 3 Rollen Del Castillo

Strawweights

Muhammad Rachman KO 8 Marti Polii
Merlito Sabillo KO 3 Jade Yagahon

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Compiled by Don Stewart

Brandon Rios KO 10 M

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Date: February 26, 2011
Television: Showtime
Promoters: Top Rank
Referee: Joe Cortez (USA)

Brandon Rios
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 134½
Residence: Oxnard, CA
Birthplace: Lubbock, TX
Record: 27-0-1 (20)
Ring Ranking: 1

Miguel Acosta
Age: 32 • **Weight:** 134½
Residence: Caracas, Venezuela
Birthplace:
Nueva Tacagua, Venezuela
Record: 28-4-2 (22)
Ring Ranking: 5

Proving himself a force to be reckoned with in the lightweight division, "Bam Bam" Rios weathered a rough start and an injured hand to dethrone Acosta for the WBA slice of the 135-pound pie.

The fight headlined a card at The Pearl inside the Palms Casino.

For the first four rounds, it looked like it was going to be an early night in Acosta's favor. The Venezuelan beltholder, unbeaten in nearly eight years, made the self-proclaimed "half-redneck, half-Californian" Rios look like a rank amateur.

Dancing around the ring and pot-shotting Rios with any and everything he threw, Acosta appeared headed toward a big win. Whenever he stopped waltzing long enough to sit down on his punches, Acosta had Rios in trouble. Bodyshots slammed into Bam Bam in the third, and a beating in the fourth had Rios on shaky ground.

Things started to change in the fifth when Rios was finally able to land several powershots. It was the closest round yet, but still edged by Acosta, who remained the busier fighter.

The sixth round was the turning point. As Acosta started to tire from his sprint-and-hit game, Rios closed the distance. Rios then let loose with a left hook that sent Acosta down for what would be the first of three knockdowns. The Venezuelan beat the count and survived the round on rubbery legs.

The momentum of the fight having dramatically shifted, the relentlessly pressuring Rios pursued his prey in the seventh and, in the eighth, cornered Acosta, unloading a left hand that sent the Venezuelan to the canvas for knockdown number two.

Totally in control, Rios forced Acosta to duke it out in several exchanges in the ninth. Dropping all attempts to flee, Acosta landed an equal number of punches but lacked Rios' power. He was completely spent by the end of the round.

Rios finished it in the 10th, when he took Acosta out with a right hand in the

LONG LEFT
Rios comes from behind to stop Acosta

iguel Acosta

Venezuelan's own corner. Seeing that Acosta was in no condition to continue, referee Joe Cortez didn't bother with a count. The official time was 1:14. Acosta was assisted out of the ring and taken to a hospital for a CAT scan. Prior to the stoppage, Rios led 86-83 on all three official scorecards.

Acosta entered as the top contender in THE RING lightweight rankings, having won 19 straight fights dating back to October 2003. This was the first defense of the belt he won by stopping Paulus Moses in May 2010 in Namibia.

Rios admitted to making several mistakes through the initial four rounds and to having injured his right hand early on (initially thought to be broken, the hand was found to be badly bruised and will only take a month or two to heal). "He caught me with a bodyshot and that s___ hurt," Rios said, referring to round four. "I knew I had to suck it up.

"After I knocked him down, it boosted my confidence. I knew I could hurt him and I pressed forward. I could see it in his eyes—the fear."

After the fight, Rios called out everyone from Humberto Soto to Marco Antonio Barrera to division champ Juan Manuel Marquez. Bam Bam doubts "they want any part of me."

"There's a new threat at 135," he added, "and his name is Brandon Rios."

Chris Cozzone

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Humberto Soto W 10 Fidel Monterrosa

If ever there was an illogical tuneup for a fighter to take, it was this one for Soto. Fresh off a grueling Fight of the Year candidate against Urbano Antillon, and, with a rematch with Antillon scheduled for May, the lightweight beltholder took a 140-pound non-title fight against Monterrosa, who had given him a reasonable test en route to a unanimous decision loss just six months earlier. The risk-reward ratio was completely out of whack here, but the fact that Soto took the rematch with Monterrosa spoke volumes about his confidence and comfort with the matchup. He backed up that confidence in the ring by winning a much more convincing decision than he did the first time around.

In a scene straight out of the early 20th century, the fighters posed together with referee Juan Jose Ramirez for prefight photos. Then they went to their respective corners so they could behave in a less civil manner. Monterrosa came out moving and feinting quite a bit, but a huge counter left hook by Soto with 20 seconds remaining in the opening round sent him moving in a different direction: toward the canvas. Monterrosa popped up unhurt and engaged in an excellent exchange over the final few seconds, but he was already down two points at round's end.

Monterrosa refused to back down, but Soto was simply a far more accurate puncher and had the slightly faster hands, which combined to earn him round after round. The pace was quick, the exchanges exciting, but Soto was always the more effective fighter, particularly with his left hook. In the sixth round, Soto turned to his overhand right more and found quite a bit of success with it.

Soto received a warning for a low blow in round seven, and Monterrosa took a 30-second timeout to recover. When the action resumed, Soto really stepped up the pressure, and, midway through the round, he staggered his Colombian-born opponent with a straight right hand over Monterrosa's left jab, knocking Monterrosa's upper body through the ropes for a brief moment. About a minute into round eight, Monterrosa's hole deepened when he landed a very low right hand and Ramirez docked him a point. The low blow appeared unintentional and landed on the hip, not the cup, but it resulted in a 10-8 round just the same.

Soto really began pouring on the offense with about a minute to go in the scheduled 10-rounder, and Monterrosa nearly tripped over the ref trying to get away from his opponent. In the final seconds, both men stood their ground and exchanged hard shots, giving the crowd at El Palenque de la Feria their money's worth even though it was a one-sided bout.

Judge Rigoberto Gonzalez (Mexico) somehow scored two rounds for Monterrosa and two even to end up with a 98-92 card, while Miguel Moran (Mexico) had it 100-90 and Jose Mora (Mexico) saw it 100-88. THE RING agreed with Mora's card—a shutout with a pair of 10-8 rounds.

Having escaped from the tuneup unscathed, Soto is scheduled to return May 7 against Antillon, with his lightweight alphabet belt at stake, on the pay-per-view undercard of Manny Pacquiao vs. Shane Mosley.

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight • **Location:** Tepic, Mexico
Date: March 5, 2011 • **Television:** FoxSports/Fox Deportes
Promoters: Promociones Zanfer, Top Rank
Referee: Juan Jose Ramirez (Mexico)

Humberto Soto	Fidel Monterrosa
Age: 30 • **Weight:** 139½	**Age:** 22
Residence: Tijuana, Mexico	**Weight:** 139½
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico	**Residence:** Ectapec, Mexico
Record: 55-7-2 (32)	**Birthplace:** Galapa, Colombia
RING Ranking: 2 (at lightweight)	**Record:** 25-3 (19)

RELENTLESS

Location: Las Vegas, NV • **Date:** March 12, 2011 • **Television:** Pay-Per-View • **Promoters:** Top Rank, Don King Productions

Miguel Vazquez W 12 Lenny Zappavigna

In a bout opening up the Miguel Cotto-Ricardo Mayorga pay-per-view telecast from the MGM Grand, Miguel Vazquez retained his lightweight belt with a convincing decision against the previously unbeaten "Lenny Zappa" Zappavigna, his mandatory challenger.

It was Vazquez' second defense of the IBF strap he won last August. He's won seven straight since a decision loss to Saul "Canelo" Alvarez at welterweight in June 2008.

Zappavigna came on like a storm early, forcing Vazquez to fight on the move, but, by round four, had lost all control of the fight and any chance of a victory. After finding a way to deal with Zappavigna's relentless pressure, the Mexican beltholder jabbed, moved, and counterpunched his way to a lopsided decision.

With each passing round, Zappavigna lost more and more of his effectiveness. Eating Vazquez's jab, Zappavigna bore in but was seldom able to land a clean shot as Vazquez deposited round after round in the bank.

Even when Vazquez took a breather in the middle rounds, Zappavigna could not turn things around. His struggles were exacerbated by a cut that opened up above his right eye. Blood flowed freely, and, by the eighth round, the Australian was, more or less, following Vazquez around while the crowd let loose a smattering of boos.

Vazquez was more aggressive in the 10th in response to his increasingly desperate challenger. The Mexican sliced open a matching cut, this time above Zappavigna's left eye and, one round later, poured on hooks both up and downstairs.

As a bloodied, tired Zappavigna resigned himself to his fate—a first loss in his first shot at a belt—Vazquez closed the show with a boxing clinic. All three Nevada judges saw Vazquez the clear winner: Glen Trowbridge and Bert Clements each scored it 118-110, while Patricia Morse Jarman had it 117-111.

At the postfight press conference, Vazquez called out Humberto Soto, Brandon Rios, and world champion Juan Manuel Marquez. "I have the style to beat Rios," he said. "My boxing style would bring me wins over him or Soto. Those are the fights I want next."

Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight • **Referee:** Tony Weeks (USA)

Miguel Vazquez	Lenny Zappavigna
Age: 24 • **Weight:** 135	**Age:** 23
Residence: Guadalajara, Mexico	**Weight:** 135
Birthplace: Guadalajara, Mexico	**Residence:** Sydney, Australia
Record: 28-3 (12)	**Birthplace:** Liverpool, Australia
Ring Ranking: 9	**Record:** 25-1 (17)

STRAIGHT DOWN THE PIPE
Vazquez splits Zappavigna's guard with a right

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

FOREMAN UNDER FIRE
Wolak cracks Foreman with a right

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

Pawel Wolak KO 6 Yuri Foreman

If rabbi-in-training Foreman has found a higher calling, the loss to Wolak at the MGM Grand proved to fight fans that it ain't boxing.

There was nothing sweet in the science Foreman tried to exact against the mauling, brawling "Raging Bull" from New Jersey. Forced to fight Jersey-style, the Brooklynite ex-beltholder suffered a more punishing loss than the preceding one against Miguel Cotto. In that fight, Foreman, fighting with a knee injury that later required surgery, showed tremendous heart.

Not so in this one. After six rounds at the receiving end of a human blender, Foreman threw in the sponge when his corner called "no mas" before round seven.

The pressure was piled on early by Wolak. At first, Foreman attempted to hit and move, but, as time went on, he chose—to the delight of the crowd and the horror of his corner—to stand and trade with the LaMotta-like machine.

Try as he could, Foreman could do nothing with punches to dissuade the Raging Bull's hard charge. Banging to the body, Wolak battered away, hurling windmill overhand rights and wild hooks at Foreman.

Dominating the inside game and preventing Foreman from his usual dance routine, Wolak was looking at a win by knockout should the fight have continued past six. With no solution to Wolak, Foreman thought better than to rise off his stool for the seventh.

"I should've boxed him more," admitted Foreman, who entered as the sixth-ranked junior middleweight in THE RING ratings. "Maybe it was the long layoff. I just didn't have it tonight."

Wolak, on the other hand, did. Having won over the fans who are already comparing him to Brandon Rios and Michael Katsidis, the Raging Bull showed up at the postfight presser with a swollen face and a huge grin.

"The plan was to get in on him and hit him everywhere, the head, the arms, the body," Wolak said. "This is how I fight. I just attack. There's really nothing pretty about me. I'm going to eventually get to you. It's only a matter of time."

Chris Cozzone

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Middleweight
Referee: Kenny Bayless (USA)

Pawel Wolak
Age: 29
Weight: 154
Residence: Mt. Arlington, NJ
Birthplace: Debica, Poland
Record: 29-1 (19)
RING Ranking: 7

Yuri Foreman
Age: 30
Weight: 155
Residence: Brooklyn, NY
Birthplace: Gomel, Belarus
Record: 28-2 (8)

Zab Judah KO 7 Kaizer Mabuza

With a single shot—a short left cross—Judah changed the course of a fight that wasn't going his way, sending Mabuza face-first through the ropes, waist bent at 90 degrees, arms flailing out parallel to the ground, as if he had been tasered.

Mabuza had inexplicably turned southpaw while bullying Judah into a corner. He paid dearly for it as Judah took a step back and unloaded on the South African.

Mike Tyson, ringside at the AmeriHealth Pavilion, went bananas, wildly cheering on his long-time friend as referee Samuel Viruet issued the count to Mabuza, who had somehow steadied himself to his feet, propping himself up on the corner turnbuckles. It was clear that Mabuza had no clue where he was. Judah sensed the moment and sprinted in immediately, letting his hands go and rocking Mabuza with vicious power shots. After several Judah lefts and rights, Viruet stepped in and stopped the fight with Mabuza stumbling around the ring, out on his feet.

The win gave Judah the vacant IBF junior welterweight belt, which was dubiously stripped from Devon Alexander late last year when Alexander had the audacity to fight division leader Tim Bradley instead of Mabuza. It's Judah's first alphabet title at 140 pounds in nearly eight years.

Upon Viruet's stoppage, Judah embraced his new trainer, Hall of Famer Pernell Whitaker, as the hometown crowd was thrown into a frenzy. The night didn't always seem destined for a happy ending for Judah, though.

Just a round earlier, Mabuza had stunned Judah badly with a hard right hook. His follow-up attack failed to put the Brooklyn native down, however.

And then there was round four, where Mabuza dropped Judah with a flurry of punches that caused his glove to touch the canvas. Judah was not hurt at all and was furious with the decision but kept his bearings about him, unlike past fights.

The bout was a contrast in styles: Judah boxing from his southpaw stance, firing jabs, and giving lots of lateral movement, ducking and dodging, while Mabuza stalked and charged forward, constantly applying pressure and thudding shots to Judah's midsection.

Every so often, Judah would land a big overhand left or a signature left uppercut that would draw a collective "ooh" from the crowd. But he was too hesitant to dispense with his power hand, content instead to box from the outside.

THE RING had Mabuza up 58-55 entering the seventh round when Judah went on to author an early candidate for knockout of the year. Time of the stoppage was 59 seconds of round seven.

"I was controlling the fight. I caught him, but I didn't finish him," said Mabuza, who was ranked seventh by THE RING entering the fight. "I had a chance to knock him out, but I didn't finish. He has a lot of experience."

"Tonight, I took my time," Judah said. "I used my jab … I felt like I could beat him with one hand (the jab). But I'm known for having devastating power."

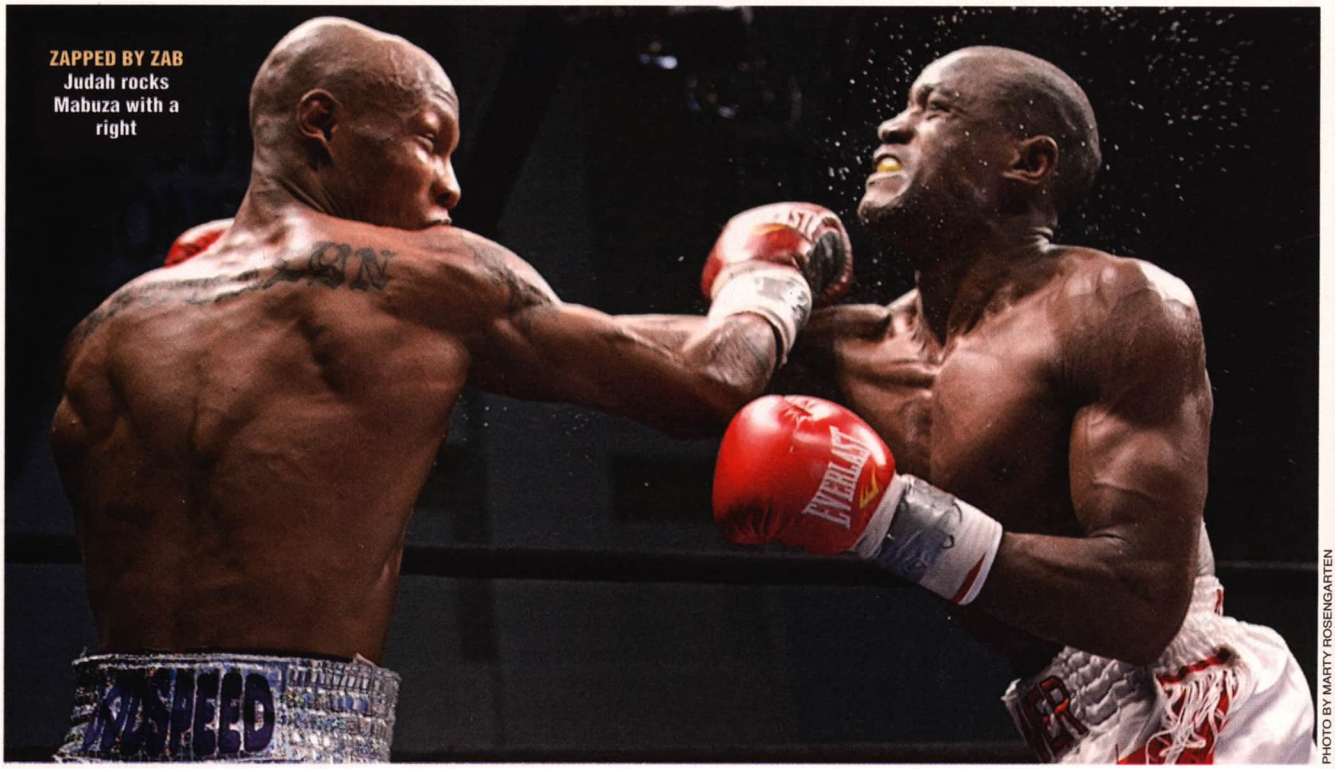
Mike Coppinger

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Welterweight
Location: Newark, NJ
Date: March 5, 2011
Television: Pay-Per-View
Promoter: Main Events
Referee: Samuel Viruet (USA)

Zab Judah
Age: 33 • **Weight:** 138
Residence: Las Vegas, Nevada
Birthplace: Brooklyn, NY
Record: 41-6 (28)
RING Ranking: 7

Kaizer Mabuza
Age: 31 • **Weight:** 139
Residence: Johannesburg, South Africa
Birthplace: Temba, South Africa
Record: 23-7-3 (14)



ZAPPED BY ZAB Judah rocks Mabuza with a right

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

WHO *REALLY* WON? Ponce De Leon jolts Broner en route to losing an unpopular decision

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Adrien Broner W 10 Daniel Ponce De Leon

Broner's nickname is "The Problem" and that's what the lightweight prospect's style was for De Leon, whom Broner defeated via unpopular unanimous decision on the Saul Alvarez-Matthew Hatton undercard at the Honda Center.

Broner, who won by scores of 99-91 and 96-94 (twice), gave the former 122-pound beltholder from Mexico fits with his speed, defensive skills, punching accuracy, and occasional lateral movement.

However, the 21-year-old's style might also be a problem for his future marketability. Broner outpointed the most experienced foe of his 2½-year career, but the former amateur standout did more posing than punching in the majority of rounds.

De Leon, who was far more cautious than usual, had a part in the lack of action in the HBO-televised 130-pound 10-rounder, but it was Broner who was making his debut on the premium cable network. He was the one who needed to make a positive impression. He is the young up-and-comer who was basically auditioning for future appearances on HBO.

If Broner wanted to make an impression, he needed to let his hands go a lot more than he did, if not for the sake of his future popularity, then because physics and common sense demanded it. Broner was the younger, bigger, faster, stronger, and more talented fighter. Why did he hold back so much?

"He's a great fighter, so I had to be careful," Broner said of Ponce De Leon after the fight. "I was focused mentally. I stayed true to our game plan and listened to my coach."

Former junior welterweight champ Aaron Pryor accompanied Broner into the ring prior to the start of the fight. Those who watched the bout wished Broner was listening between rounds to "The Hawk," a Hall of Famer renowned for his relentless, two-fisted style.

Ponce De Leon would have appreciated that. The heavy-handed southpaw might have been able to hurt his naturally larger opponent had there been more exchanges.

The 30-year-old veteran, who was more active than Broner (but not as accurate), still believes he did enough to win the fight.

"I thought I won seven out of the 10 rounds," De Leon said. "The big difference was the weight. He was too big. I could feel the difference although I didn't feel his power.

"I'm going to go back down to featherweight."

He'll have fewer problems finding a good fight there.

Doug Fischer

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Lightweight
Location: Anaheim, CA
Date: March 5, 2011
Television: HBO
Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions
Referee: Ray Corona (California)

Adrien Broner
Age: 21 • **Weight:** 129¾
Residence: Cincinnati, OH
Birthplace: Cincinnati, OH
Record: 20-0 (16)

Daniel Ponce De Leon
Age: 30 • **Weight:** 128½
Residence: Huntington Park, CA
Birthplace:
Ciudad Cuauhtemoc, Mexico
Record: 41-3 (34)

Andy Lee KO 10 Craig McEwan

CELTIC WAR! Irishman Lee rallies back to stop Scotland's McEwan

"Celtic War" seemed an appropriate moniker for this brawl, the way Lee and McEwan went at each other from the start. The two had met in the amateurs in 2005, and Lee dominated. The first round seemed to be a continuance of that, but something started happening in the second round. Fighting without his trainer, Emanuel Steward, who was working Miguel Cotto's corner that same night in Las Vegas, Lee began taking punishment in the second round. McEwan also was fighting without his trainer, Freddie Roach, who was in the Philippines working with his prized pupil, Manny Pacquiao.

Nonetheless, McEwan established himself in the second round. Both are rangy, lanky middleweight southpaws that can't seem to get out of the way of a punch. THE RING had the fight even after four rounds; then McEwan started taking firm command in the middle rounds. The Scot did it by coming forward and mixing his punches, scoring to the body and head. A right-left in the fifth had Lee teetering and hanging on for dear life.

What changed everything for Lee—and possibly saved his career—came in the ninth, when he landed a straight left directly on McEwan's nose, sending him back into one of the turnbuckle pads, where he slid to the floor. The knockdown came late in the round, but Lee made sure he closed the deal in the 10th. A crushing left hook sent McEwan down again, and this time referee Steve Smoger stood over the fallen fighter and waved it over at the 0:56 mark.

At the time of the stoppage, it was a majority draw on the judges' scorecards. Judges Glenn Feldman (USA) and Clark Sammartino (USA) each scored it 85-85 and Donald Ackerman had McEwan ahead, 86-84, as did THE RING, entering the final round.

"I think for the fans it was an exciting fight, but, for me, I wasn't really pleased with it," Lee said. "I hurt him early on and I started looking for the big punch. I didn't stick to any boxing. I was looking for the big punch all of the time and I wasn't consistent. My corner kept telling me to box and use combinations and not load up. I was one-punch happy. I was losing the fight in the middle rounds. I kept thinking to myself that if he was going to beat me, he'd have to kill me. I started coming forward and taking his best and landing my own shots."

Once Lee established that, McEwan began wilting.

"I dug deep and I showed my heart," Lee said. "I think my night was slipping away in those middle rounds. I did see my career start to slip away, and I had to do something about it."

Joseph Santoliquito

Antonio DeMarco W 12 Reyes Sanchez

A near-sellout crowd of 6,000 packed the Heartland Events Center for a rare pro fight card in the Cornhusker State, and DeMarco and Sanchez didn't disappoint. The two put together a lightweight scrap that was entertaining although, in the end, it was the poise and power of DeMarco that proved to be the difference as the southpaw captured a clear-cut unanimous decision.

Fighting outside of his native Mexico for the first time, the charismatic Sanchez failed to get the nod, but he was fun to watch. His hair dyed with pink and white streaks, Sanchez was aggressive and busy throughout. He tagged the favored DeMarco frequently but didn't have enough behind his punches to do any damage.

It looked like this one was going to end prematurely when, in the opening minute, DeMarco opened a bad cut above Sanchez' left eye with the first shot he landed, a southpaw left. Sanchez bled throughout, but his corner did an excellent job in keeping the cut in check. DeMarco used his longer reach in the early rounds to counter Sanchez from a distance while Sanchez came forward and tried to connect with wild shots.

Sanchez began to come on after the third, when he was able to back DeMarco into the ropes and land on the inside. The fourth saw the first of several heated exchanges in the final 20 seconds of a round as both fighters tried to sway the judges. Though still landing effectively, DeMarco's work rate slowed in the middle rounds, which helped Sanchez narrow his deficit a bit on the cards. DeMarco got busier in the eighth, and, in the ninth he began to establish his distance again. Sanchez was warned for holding onto the top rope in the eighth, and DeMarco was allowed time to recover after a low blow from Sanchez in the 10th.

Sanchez never stopped coming forward, and, while he ate several hard counters from DeMarco, he connected frequently himself. But by the later rounds, DeMarco

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight
Location: Mashantucket, Connecticut
Date: March 12, 2011
Television: HBO
Promoters: DiBella Entertainment, Banner Promotions, Gary Shaw
Referee: Steve Smoger (USA)

Andy Lee
Age: 26
Weight: 162½
Residence: Detroit, Michigan
Birthplace: London, United Kingdom
Record: 25-1(19)

Craig McEwan
Age: 28 • **Weight:** 162½
Residence: Hollywood, California
Birthplace: Edinburgh, Scotland
Record: 19-1 (10)

MATCH STATS

Division: Lightweight
Location: Grand Island, NE
Date: February 26, 2011
Television: Showtime
Promoter: Gary Shaw Productions
Referee: Vic Drakulich (USA)

Antonio DeMarco
Age: 25
Weight: 134½
Residence: Tijuana, Mexico
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico
Record: 25-2-1 (18)

Reyes Sanchez
Age: 25
Weight: 134½
Residence: Mexico City, Mexico
Birthplace: Mexico City, Mexico
Record: 20-4-1 (11)

was wading through Sanchez' shots and was never in any peril. If DeMarco had been facing a heavier-handed opponent, though, this one could have ended up looking much different.

As it turned out, all three US judges had it for DeMarco: Nathan Palmer (Indiana) 117-111, Dick Flaherty (Massachusetts) 116-112, and Jeff Sinnett (Nebraska) 115-113. THE RING agreed with Palmer's tally. It was DeMarco's second straight win since a ninth-round kayo loss a year before to the late Edwin Valero in what proved to be Valero's final fight.

With the win, DeMarco became the mandatory challenger for WBC beltholder Humberto Soto, but, because the two are cousins, they will not face each other. Soto is scheduled to face Urbano Antillon in a May 7 rematch. If Soto wins, he'll likely move up in weight with the belt automatically going to DeMarco.

"Sanchez is a great fighter, and he threw a lot of punches," DeMarco said afterward. "It was a great fight. I love fighting in Nebraska. The crowd was really into it. That really motivated me."

Gilberto Keb Baas KO 8 Jose Antonio Aguirre

In his first bout since stunning Omar Niño for the WBC belt last November, unlikely junior flyweight beltholder Keb Baas had little trouble with a shopworn Aguirre at the Poliforum Zamna.

Aguirre was handpicked by Keb Baas' team for their fighter's homecoming defense, and "The Jaguar" came with a minor selling point in that he had stopped Keb Baas' brother, Juan Alfonso, in February 2003. But that was back when Aguirre was in the midst of his three-year, seven-defense reign as the WBC strawweight beltholder. On this night, Aguirre was eight years older and had lost seven of his previous nine bouts, including three by kayo. It's shameful that the WBC approved Aguirre, though it's hardly surprising.

Keb Baas was in control of the fight from the opening round. He appeared stronger, quicker, and looser than the veteran Aguirre, who ate an overhand left late in the first. The second was Aguirre's best round as The Jaguar made decent use of his 2½-inch reach advantage, keeping Keb Baas at bay with jabs and long right hands that found their mark.

Aguirre attempted to come forward in the third, leading to some of the best exchanges of the bout, though Keb Baas got the better of it and shook Aguirre late in the round with a left hand. Keb Baas was in complete control from there. He patiently broke Aguirre down with a two-fisted attack that included some terrific bodywork. Gradually intensifying his assault, Keb Baas rocked his opponent with hooks upstairs in the sixth and again in the eighth. His legs gone, Aguirre opted not to come out for the ninth. Two of the judges had it a shutout for Keb Baas, while the third gave Aguirre one round.

Next up for Keb Baas is a mandatory defense against Adrian Hernandez, 20-1-1, who scored a fourth-round stoppage of Keb Baas in March 2008. The bout will reportedly be held in May in Cancun, Mexico. Meanwhile, Aguirre announced his retirement shortly after suffering the fifth loss in his last six fights.

MATCH STATS

Division: Junior Flyweight
Location: Merida, Mexico • **Date:** February 26, 2011
Promoters: Cancun Boxing, HG Boxing
Referee: Roberto Ramirez Jr. (Puerto Rico)

Gilberto Keb Baas
Age: 33 • **Weight:** 107¾
Residence: Merida, Mexico
Birthplace: Hunucma, Mexico
Record: 35-20-4 (22)
Ring Ranking: 2

Jose Antonio Aguirre
Age: 35 • **Weight:** 107 3/4
Residence: Cardenas, Mexico
Birthplace: Cardenas, Mexico
Record: 35-10-1 (21)

Felix Sturm KO 7 Ronald Hearns

Sturm creamed Hearns in a competitive but often one-sided contest before 7,000 politely enthusiastic fans at Porsche Arena and a typically huge German television audience. There was flag-waving pageantry galore as Hearns went out on his red, white, and blue shield with nothing to be ashamed of.

With his iconic father, Thomas, in attendance, Hearns attempted to win the belt "The Hit Man" failed to capture in his legendary battle with Marvin Hagler. It was not to be. Not even close.

Hearns kept his jab working from the start, but it was the slicker and quicker Sturm who scored first and most often with the stick. A tentative Hearns didn't connect with much beyond Sturm's peek-a-boo gloves, while a patiently pressuring Sturm forced Hearns around the strands behind grazing combinations.

Sturm seized control from the second round on, but Hearns found some punching room in the third and nicked Sturm under the right eye. The excellently conditioned Sturm breathed calmly and didn't seem to notice whenever he got tagged.

Action picked up in the fifth round, and the crowd got a bit anxious as Hearns found success and finally forced Sturm backward. The increased effort seemed to cost a puffy-faced Hearns dearly. Throughout the sixth, he looked spent and vulnerable.

They came out fast for the seventh, and Sturm backed Hearns into a corner during a mutual flurry. Out of nowhere, a pair of rights bent Hearns into deep space while ref Raul Caiz Jr. jumped in at the perfect instant. The official time was 0:48 of the seventh, with Sturm pitching a shutout on the official cards.

It was Sturm's ninth successful defense in his second reign as WBA beltholder.

"My training is what makes the difference," professed Sturm. "He was also strong, but I knew I could fight my hardest and keep going. I want to face another ranked fighter within a month or two, then have a big unification match. I would be happy to return to America."

Mike Jones W 12 Jesus Soto-Karass

Proving last November's majority decision win against welterweight contender Soto-Karass was no fluke, undefeated Philly contender Jones bested the rugged Mexican again. This time, it was unanimous.

The rematch was the co-feature to the Nonito Donaire-Fernando Montiel showdown at the Mandalay Bay.

First time these two met, Soto-Karass came back from a near knockout, nearly evening the score over 10 rounds as Jones ran out of gas. Fuel wasn't an issue for Jones this time as he outboxed his bloodied-but-determined opponent over the 12-round distance.

After avoiding Soto-Karass in the first, Jones upped his aggression in the second. A clash of heads opened a cut above Soto-Karass' eye in the third, prompting referee Kenny Bayless to summon the ringside doc for a look-see. After the fight resumed, the blood poured forth from a cut over the opposite eye, this one resulting from a punch.

Pouring out equal amounts of blood and guts, Soto-Karass waded in, swinging at Jones with desperate, wild blows. Jones kept his cool, outboxing the aggressive Mexican, but also obliging the crowd in several heated exchanges.

Jones jabbed his way through the rounds, letting Soto-Karass walk into right hands and uppercuts. In the ninth, he blasted Soto-Karass with a brutal body assault. Though clearly hurt, Soto-Karass rallied at the end of the round. In the 10th, Soto-Karass' cuts were looked at again. The round belonged to Jones, who poured it on until the 12th when Soto-Karass staged a desperate-but-futile rally attempt.

All three Nevada judges scored the bout for Jones: Richard Ocasio 117-111, Robert Hoyle 116-112, and Duane Ford 115-113.

At the postfight presser, Jones promoter Bob Arum took the opportunity to fire a verbal shot at Golden Boy Promotions, Victor Ortiz, and Andre Berto.

PHOTO BY ALEX GRIM/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

IN THE EYE OF THE STURM
Hearns in trouble along the ropes

MATCH STATS

Division: Middleweight
Location: Stuttgart, Germany
Date: February 19, 2011
Promoter: Sturm Boxing
Referee: Raul Caiz Jr. (USA)

Felix Sturm
Age: 32
Weight: 159½
Residence: Cologne, Germany
Birthplace: Leverkusen, Germany
Record: 35-2-1 (15)
Ring Ranking: 1

Ronald Hearns
Age: 32
Weight: 159¼
Residence: Southfield, MI
Birthplace: Detroit, MI
Record: 26-2 (20)

It was nice to see the healthy looking Thomas Hearns speak before the appreciative audience as a celebrated boxing ambassador. As for the younger Hearns, he went down fighting in an honorable, crowd-pleasing way. "I'm not disappointed," said the elder Hearns. "Ronald gave his best. Sturm is just a better fighter who deserves the title."

Meanwhile, it was another highly successful event for Sturm's fledgling promotional enterprise. Sturm paid big to obtain professional autonomy. After two solid events so far, it looks like a profitable move.

Sturm trains at his own sizeable, public gym with an emphasis on cross-training conditioning. Energy-wise, Sturm looked like he might be starting to age backward. The proven veteran still deserves pound-for-pound consideration, though we know how quickly that can change.

Phil Woolever

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

REPEAT PERFORMANCE
Jones had a much easier time against Soto-Karass in the rematch

MATCH STATS

Division: Welterweight
Location: Las Vegas, NV
Date: February 19, 2011
Television: HBO
Promoter: Top Rank
Referee: Kenny Bayless (Nevada)

Mike Jones
Age: 27
Weight: 146½
Residence: Philadelphia, PA
Birthplace: Philadelphia, PA
Record: 24-0 (18)
Ring Ranking: 10

Jesus Soto-Karass
Age: 28
Weight: 146
Residence: Los Angeles, CA
Birthplace: Los Mochis, Mexico
Record: 24-6-3 (16)

"You people should be getting tired of seeing Andre Berto fight busboys and junior welters whose only distinction is quitting," Arum ranted, referring to the Golden Boy-promoted fight between welterweight beltholder Berto and 140-pound contender Ortiz, who surrendered against Marcos Maidana in 2009. "Maybe we can test Berto and see if he can *really* fight—against a real Philadelphia welterweight like Mike Jones."

Jones was less animated about his next foe, saying only: "I'll fight any of the greats out there. Bring 'em on."

Jones gave himself a B+ grade, admitting Soto-Karass was his toughest opponent to date. "He caught me clean a few times but never dazed me, though I thought I hurt him with a couple shots to the body," he said. "He just stood there and said, 'C'mon.' He kept taking them and taking them—I took a deep breath and stuck to jabbing."

Chris Cozzone

Vitali Klitschko KO 1 Odlanier Solis

For a single, short right-hand counter, Klitschko's fight-finishing solo shot had an impact that echoed far beyond German ringposts.

When Solis collapsed and then wobbled, unable to stand from a thud that didn't seem to land with major impact or leverage, there were howls of protest. Klitschko confronted Solis immediately after the contest at LANXESS Arena was waved off and demanded vindication.

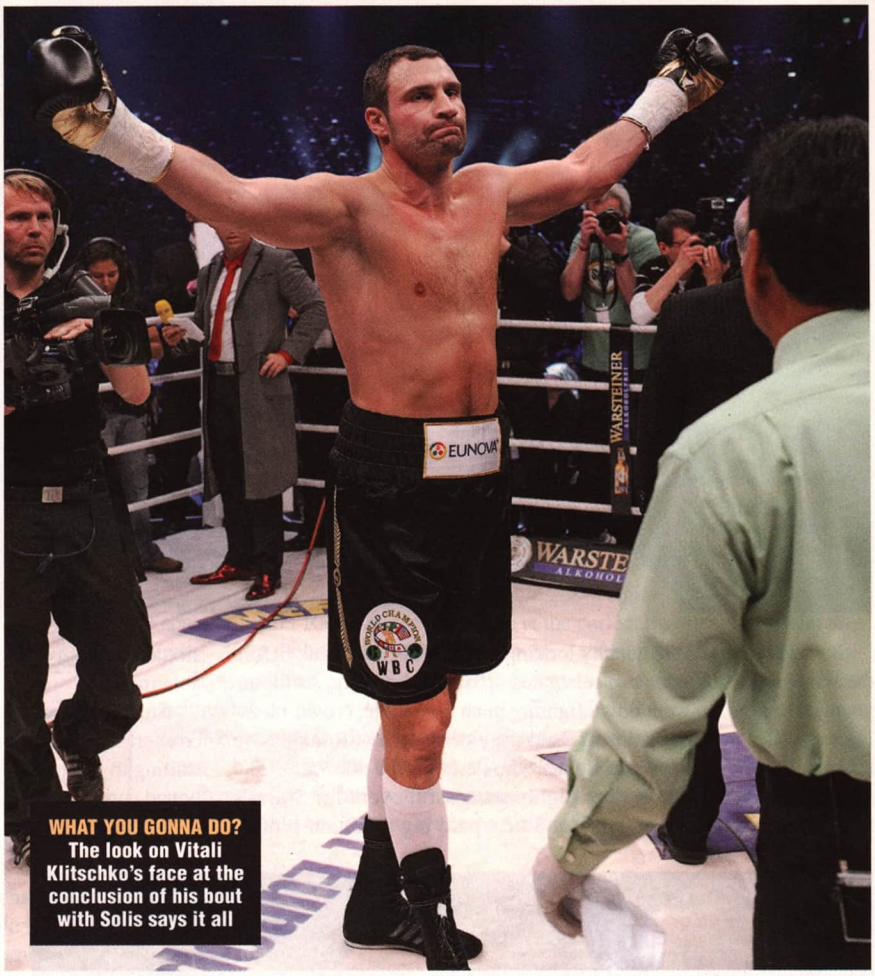
When it was determined Solis did indeed suffer a serious knee injury, there was considerable discussion about an eventual rematch, though none of it came from Klitschko.

Entrance video featured so much of saintly looking Klitschko around historic Cologne Cathedral, one could be excused for figuring Solis didn't have a prayer. What transpired in less than three minutes of limited action, though, was still enough to convince many neutral observers that heavy underdog Solis actually had a good chance of winning. Since that truth will never be known, all we can judge are the facts of the fight.

Solis and his outspoken team definitely looked like they came to win. Though weights were close, 6'7" Klitschko towered over Solis in terms of ring presence. His six-inch height advantage appeared more like six feet. Solis minimized Klitschko's small reach margin with speed, but Klitschko still moved him around.

Solis landed some stinging punches up and down and was winning a crowd-pleasing first frame when Klitschko scored with a right counter that was almost blocked but tagged Solis on the forehead. After a delayed reaction, he stumbled down backward, immediately grasping his right knee. Solis used the ropes to rise, but he couldn't continue.

The controversial conking had just enough dramatic substance to elevate the event from debacle to an I-was-there sort of scene. It's quite uncommon for reserved German audiences to get rowdy, but the sold-out crowd of 19,000 hooted with rare venom at the anticlimax.



WHAT YOU GONNA DO? The look on Vitali Klitschko's face at the conclusion of his bout with Solis says it all

PHOTO BY PATRIK STOLLARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Solis was later alleged to have knee issues prior to the fight, but, at press time, no information was available. Local coverage sensationalized almost every angle of the evening. A general conclusion found Solis was a victim of bad luck, courtesy of Vitali.

"It was my knee, nothing he did," offered Solis. "I barely felt his punch, but, as soon as I fell, I knew something was wrong."

How the end came was not as important for Klitschko or his followers, who ultimately celebrated like it was a spectacular blastout. Actually, it was similar to the much differently received Mike Tyson-Michael Spinks megabout, except Spinks had a knee brace on *before* the fight and never made it out of the first round.

"It was a good punch that I practiced, but I didn't know it was that good," said Klitschko, who made his eighth defense of the WBC trinket. "I feel bad for the fans. I fight for them, not for me."

For Klitschko, the hoopla was just a bump in the road, not on the forehead. His horizons are bright though uncertain with another possible stay-busy affair prior to a potentially bigger fight against either Tomasz Adamek or David Haye this summer.

Phil Woolever

MATCH STATS

Division: Heavyweight
Location: Cologne, Germany
Date: March 19, 2011
Television: EPIX
Promoters: K2 Promotions, KMG
Referee: Jose Guadalupe Garcia (Mexico)

Vitali Klitschko
Age: 39 • **Weight:** 249½
Residence: Kiev, Ukraine
Birthplace: Belovodskyoe, Kyrgyzstan
Record: 42-2 (39)
Ring Ranking: 1

Odlanier Solis
Age: 30
Weight: 247
Residence: Miami, Florida
Birthplace: Havana, Cuba
Record: 17-1 (12)

Lucian Bute KO 10 Brian Magee

Bute's signature bodywork made the difference against prohibitive 12-1 underdog Magee, but the bout proved surprisingly competitive for the nine-plus rounds that it lasted, with the Irishman providing some thrilling moments.

Romanian-born Bute was defending his IBF super middleweight strap for the seventh time in his adopted hometown. His enormous popularity was strong enough to draw 12,219 to Montreal's Bell Centre, where he'd made six of his prior defenses, despite Magee's lack of name recognition.

The seasoned Magee optimized his southpaw stance, scoring effectively with his jab and right hook and looking to time his straight left over the 6'2" southpaw Bute's own lead right hand, which dangled recklessly near his knee. Bute, who was facing his first southpaw opponent in four years, is gifted with remarkably fast hands and pinpoint punching ability, as well as nimble legs that augment his unique talent for doing his most effective fighting in reverse while scoring counters.

But, as Magee and previous opponent Jesse Brinkley proved, Bute doesn't exactly have radar in his head, and he has taken some unnecessary shots in his last two bouts. Magee reached him several times in the opening rounds with right hooks, along with a sharp left lead in the third that had Bute's legs momentarily betraying him before he circled away looking somewhat startled that he had been hit so cleanly.

It was Magee's lone dominant moment in a fight Bute otherwise controlled, though sometimes just barely.

Bute amassed points in the first four rounds with a busy array of sharp jabs and cuffing right hooks. Magee managed some early success with right hooks to the midriff. But bodywork is Bute's specialty, and he proved it as the fight reached the middle stages. A savage right uppercut to the pit of Magee's stomach dropped the Irishman in the sixth, and Bute started to pull away.

Bute landed another left uppercut to the ribs at the end of round seven, collapsing Magee to his hands and knees as he gasped for breath. The courageous Magee continued to box well going into the fateful 10th, but Bute, clearly fired up by the knockdowns, accelerated his offense through rounds eight and nine. Magee continued to trade zealously in the 10th, but a spectacular uppercut to the chin by Bute—similar to the singular shot he used to kayo Edison Miranda—dropped the challenger for good as referee Pete Podgorski waived it over at 2:04, the moment Magee caved to the mat.

The loss ended a 10-bout unbeaten streak for Magee, whose last defeat was a hotly contested 11th-round stoppage to Carl Froch in May 2006. "Brian Magee is a good fighter, seriously," Bute said afterward. "He's tough, has a hard head and a big heart."

Paul Salgado

LOOK WHAT I DID
Bute reacts after folding McGee to the canvas with a bodyshot

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

MATCH STATS

Division: Super Middleweight
Location: Montreal, Canada
Date: March 19, 2011
Television: Showtime
Promoter: Interbox
Referee: Pete Podgorski (USA)

Lucian Bute
Age: 31 • **Weight:** 167½
Residence: Montreal, Quebec
Birthplace: Pechea, Romania
Record: 28-0 (23)
Ring Ranking: 2

Brian Magee
Age: 35
Weight: 167¾
Residence: Belfast, Northern Ireland
Birthplace: Lisburn, Northern Ireland
Record: 34-4-1 (24)

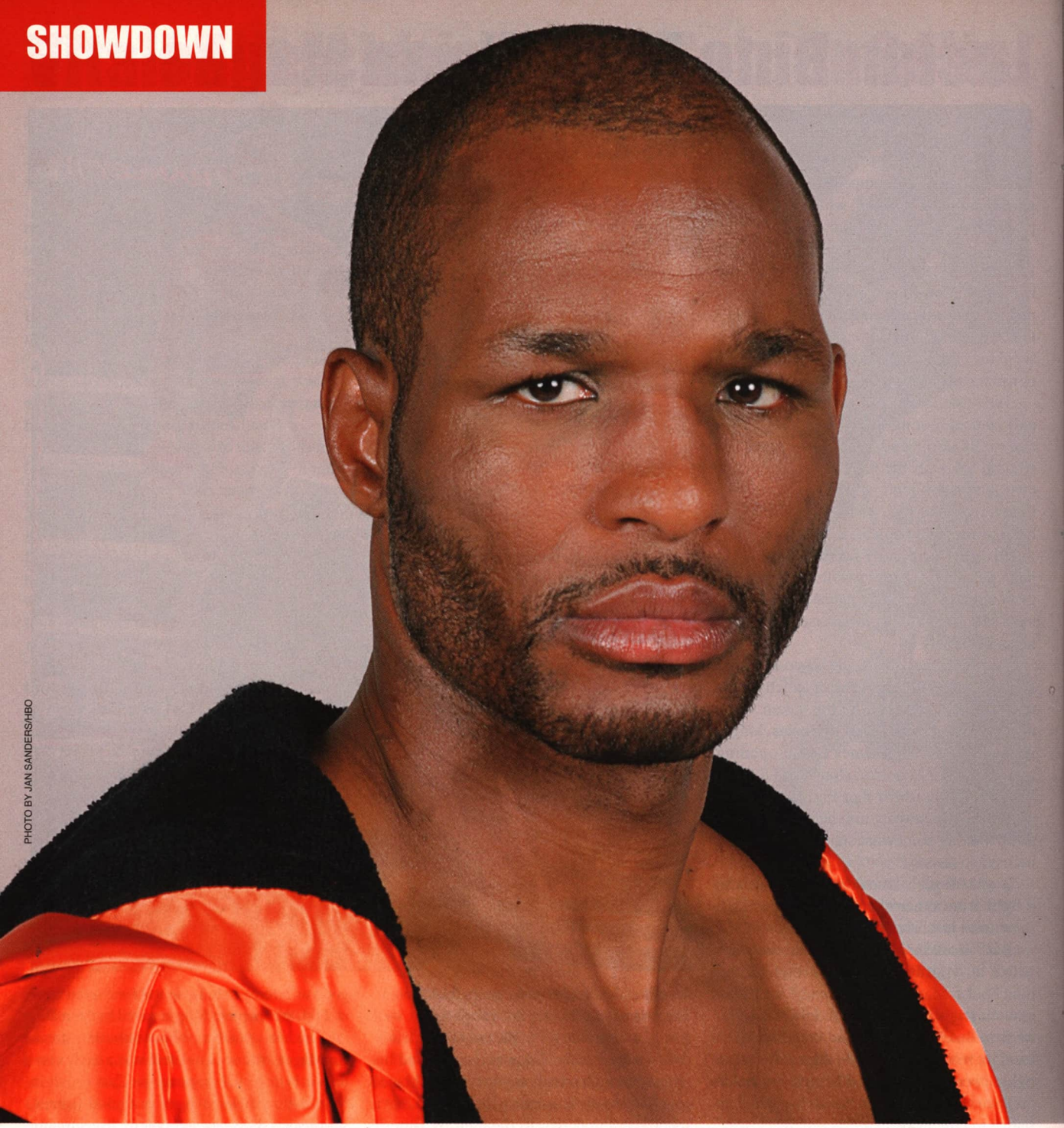


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS/HBO

Bernard Hopkins Main Event

The Ring Light Heavyweight World Championship

On paper, last December's match between Ring *light heavyweight champion Jean Pascal and Bernard Hopkins was intended to be a one-act play. Leading man Pascal was supposed to slice, dice, and put away his elderly antagonist with Zorro-like panache before thousands of his adopted countrymen in Quebec City.*

But Hopkins was never one to stick to anyone's script but his own, and he unveiled his rewrite in dramatic fashion. After shaking off two early knockdowns, "The Executioner" seized command in the middle rounds and unleashed a finishing kick that belied his advanced years.

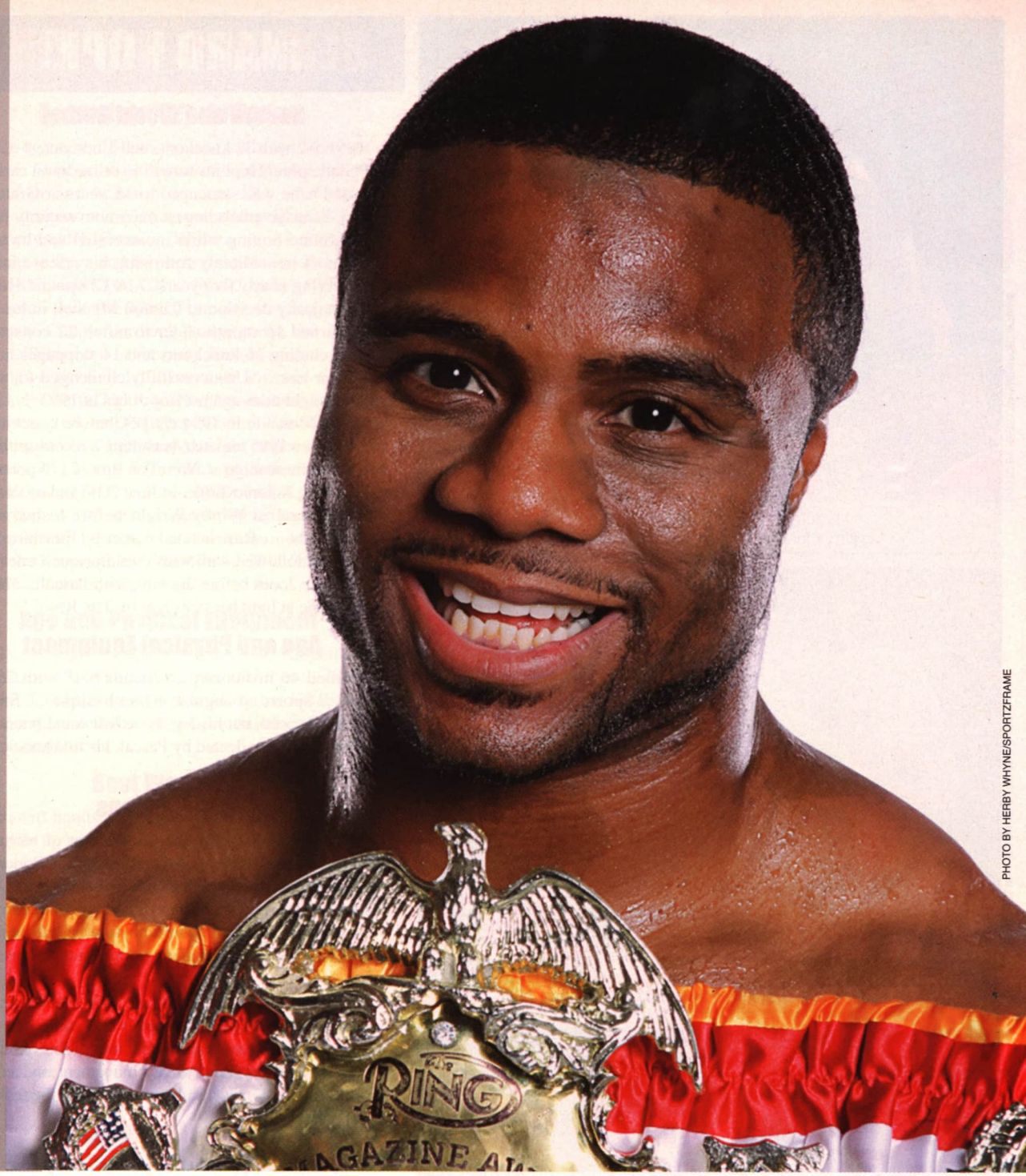
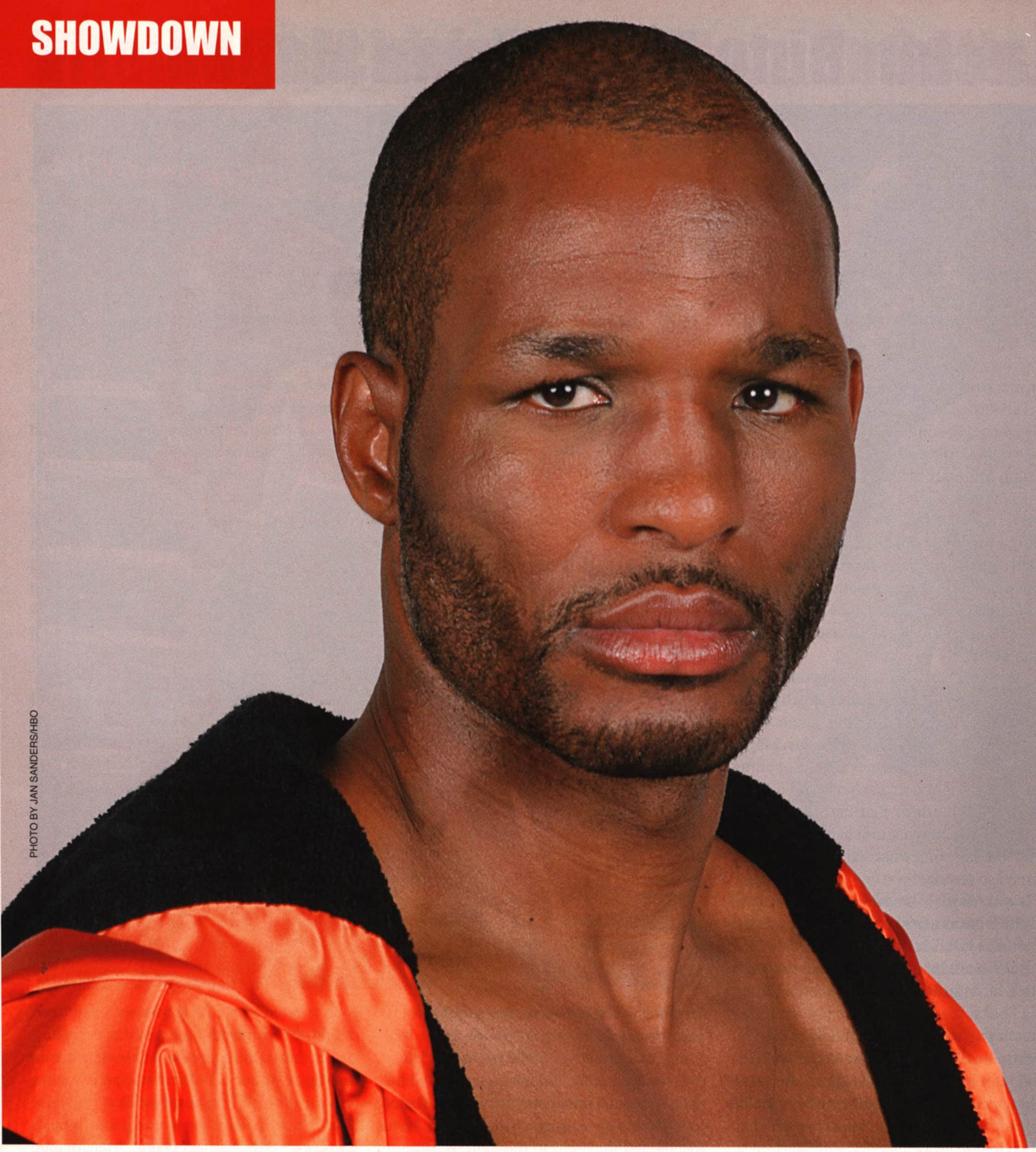


PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

12 Rounds Jean Pascal

Once the final curtain fell, many believed Hopkins had done enough to become the oldest man to capture a major title, surpassing George Foreman by 38 days. American Steve Morrow agreed as he saw Hopkins a 114-112 winner, but the scorecards of Belgian Daniel Van de Wiele (114-114) and Quebecois Claude Paquette (113-113) allowed Pascal to escape with his belt via draw.

The ensuing controversy has led to an improbable second act. Will Pascal relearn his lines and produce a performance worthy of an Oscar (not De La Hoya) or a Tony (not Margarito)? Or will Hopkins continue to be like Frank Sinatra and do everything his way en route to making more history? Tune in to HBO on May 21 and find out.



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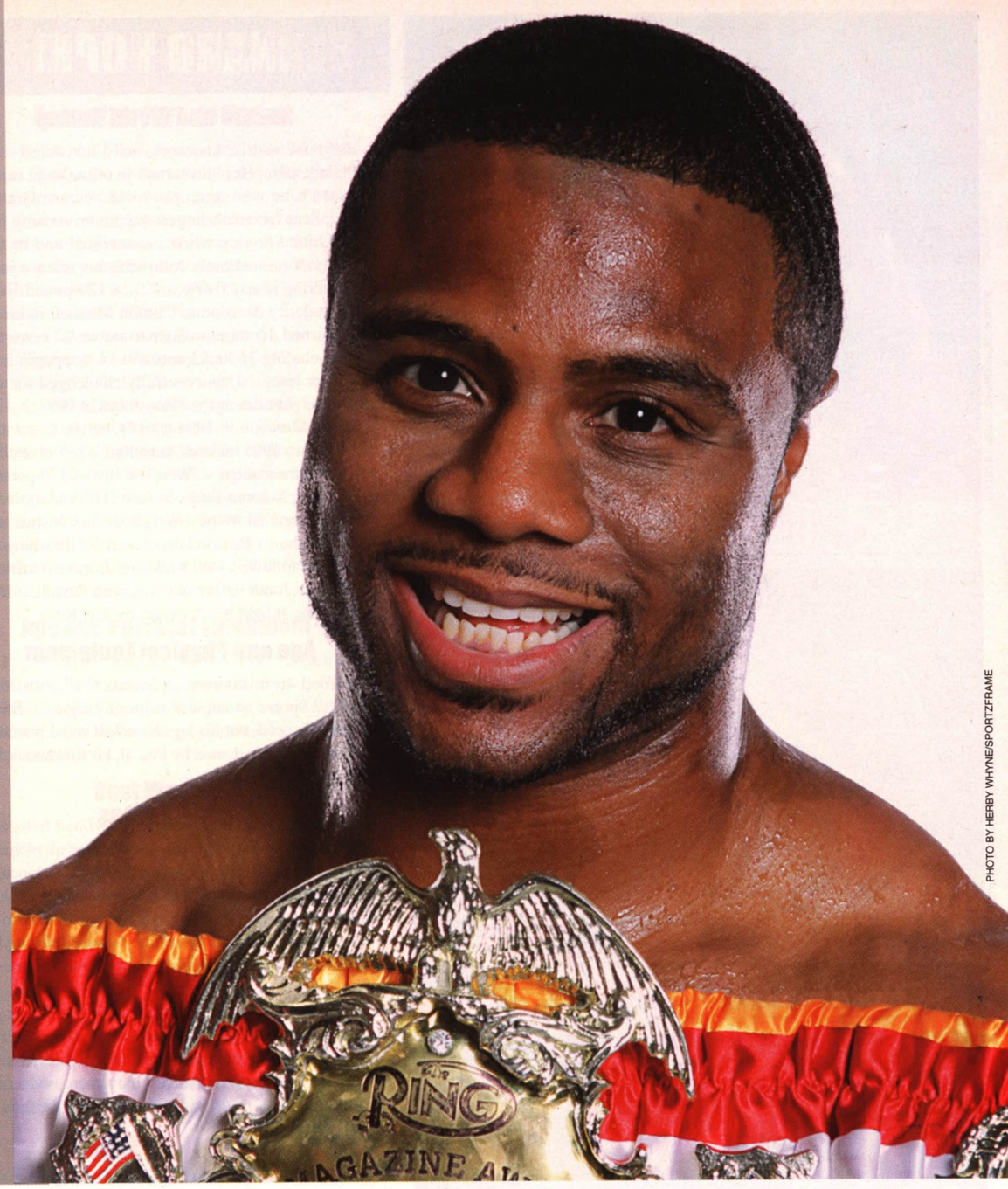

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BERNARD HOPKINS

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

BERNARD HOPKINS D 12 JEAN PASCAL
Hopkins lands a right during his late-round surge

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

BERNARD HOPKINS W 12 ENRIQUE ORNELAS
Beating Ornelas was Hopkins first fight in Philly since 2003

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

BERNARD HOPKINS W 12 ANTONIO TARVER
Hopkins penetrates Tarver's guard en route to light heavy championship

Record and World Rating

Is 51-5-2 with 32 knockouts and 1 no-contest … Born in Philadelphia, Hopkins turned to crime at an early age and, at 17, he was sentenced to 18 years at Graterford Prison, Pennsylvania's largest maximum security facility … He found boxing while incarcerated and he turned pro almost immediately following his release in 1988 after serving nearly five years … A 177-pound Hopkins lost a majority decision to Clinton Mitchell in his debut but returned 16 months later to notch 22 consecutive wins, including 16 knockouts and 14 stoppages in three rounds or less … Unsuccessfully challenged for vacant middleweight titles against Roy Jones in 1993 (L 12) and Segundo Mercado in 1994 (D 12), before knocking out Mercado in a 1995 rematch, launching a record-setting 10-year, 20-defense reign … Won THE RING's 175-pound title by upsetting Antonio Tarver in June 2006 and successfully defended against Winky Wright before losing title to Joe Calzaghe … Resuscitated career by thrashing Kelly Pavlik and followed with wins over Enrique Ornelas and a shopworn Jones before drawing with Pascal … Is rated number one at light heavyweight by THE RING.

Age and Physical Equipment

Turned 46 in January … Stands 6'1" with 75-inch reach … Sports an angular, trim physique … Still has good hand speed, but his legs have lost some bounce and his chin was twice dented by Pascal, his first knockdowns since Mercado in 1994.

Best Weapons

His vast boxing IQ. His knowledge of technique, pacing, and punch selection—combined with his incredible conditioning—have allowed him to thrive for far longer than anyone could have imagined … He is also well-versed in psychological warfare before and during fights and he's a master of neutralizing opponents' offenses.

Previous fight

Started slowly against Pascal as he was floored twice, but he eventually settled down and found his rhythm …: A solid body attack slowed Pascal's movement, and a furious drive in rounds 11 and 12 almost pulled out the fight.

Quality of Opposition

Hopkins has seen and done it all in a 23-year, 59-fight career … On the way up, he repelled title challengers Dennis Milton (KO 4) and Gilbert Baptist (W 12) before meeting Jones … After disposing of former 154-pound titleholder Lupe Aquino (W 12) and gaining the IBF 160-pound belt two fights later, Hopkins' title victims included John David Jackson (KO 7), Glen Johnson (KO 11), Simon Brown (KO 6), Robert Allen (three times), Antwun Echols (twice), Keith Holmes (W 12), Felix Trinidad (W 12), William Joppy (W 12), Oscar De La Hoya (KO 9), and Howard Eastman (W 12) … After losing middleweight title to Jermain Taylor via very close, controversial decision (twice), he tackled Tarver (W 12), Wright (W 12), Calzaghe (L 12), Pavlik (W 12), Jones (W 12), and Pascal at 175.

JEAN PASCAL

Record and World Rating

Is 26-1-1 with 15 knockouts … Moved from Haiti to Laval, Quebec, with his mother and older brother at age four and began boxing at 13 … Amassed a 103-18 amateur record that included gold at the 2002 Commonwealth Games, bronze at the 2003 Pan American games, and three straight Boxer of the Year awards in Canada (2001-03) … Was Canada's 165-pound representative in the 2004 Olympics but lost a 36-24 decision to Cuba's Yordanis Despaigne in the opening round … Turned pro in February 2005 by stopping Justin Hahn in two and rolled to 21-straight wins before losing a decision against Carl Froch for the vacant WBC super middleweight title in December 2008 … Two fights later, he dethroned WBC light heavyweight champion Adrian Diaconu (W 12) and followed with defenses against Silvio Branco (TKO 10) and Diaconu (W 12)…Won recognition as THE RING's champion by beating Chad Dawson by an 11-round technical decision and retained it with the draw against Hopkins … THE RING's light heavyweight champion.

Age and Physical Equipment

Is 28 years old … Stands 5'10½" with 72-inch reach … Boasts a chiseled torso and muscular legs … Blessed with excellent hand speed and mobility, but his ability to fight 12 hard rounds has been questioned … Possesses power in both hands.

Best Weapons

His swift hands and counterpunching prowess allow him to pile up points and, in the case of Hopkins, score flash knockdowns … The left hook is Pascal's money punch, for a crushing left flattened Pablo Nievas and solid hooks dropped Adrian Diaconu in the fifth (first fight) and Hopkins late in round three.

Previous fight

Against Hopkins, Pascal started quickly with knockdowns in rounds one (a right behind the ear) and three (hook to the chin) but from that point forward fought with extreme caution … Was considered fortunate to leave the ring with a majority draw.

Quality of Opposition

Because he has faced just three opponents with .500 or worse records in 28 fights, Pascal has built a solid foundation … He blew away veterans Homer Gibbons (KO 2) and James Crawford (KO 3) in his fifth and eighth bouts and knocked off unbeaten Jermain Mackey (W 12) … Also beat lanky veteran Kingsley Ikeke (W 12) before losing to Froch … His competition since rising to 175 has been excellent: He twice beat Diaconu (undefeated going into their first fight), stopped 70-fight veteran and ex-titlist Branco, and looked impressive against previously undefeated Chad Dawson until the fight was stopped by a clash of heads … Despite the blemish against Hopkins, the experience of facing someone of B-Hop's caliber had to be beneficial.

PHOTO BY ROGERIO BARBOSA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

JEAN PASCAL D 12 BERNARD HOPKINS
Pascal watches as referee counts over B-Hop

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

JEAN PASCAL TECH. W 11 CHAD DAWSON
Pascal rips into Dawson

PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE/SPORTZFRAME

JEAN PASCAL W 12 ADRIAN DIANCONU
Pascal beat Diaconu twice in fierce struggles

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BERNARD HOPKINS

Defense

While Hopkins once relied on right-handed power, defense is now B-Hop's forte … Holds his hands in a classic posture most of the time but occasionally drops the left to draw leads … His somewhat slower reflexes have rendered him vulnerable to quick counters but has the guile and conditioning to clear his head quickly … Uses his defense to set up counters, lay traps, and muzzle opponents.

Style

Since hitting his mid-30s, Hopkins has morphed into an old-school stylist in the mold of Archie Moore … Takes enormous pride in thwarting his rival's weapons with his array of feints, smothering tactics, and infighting wiles … Possesses excellent stamina and has the patience to let a fight play itself out without letting it slip away … Like Pascal, he has a notoriously low punch output but managed to outthrow (502-350) and outland Pascal (153-86).

The Questions

Will Hopkins be able to summon another great effort after the disappointment of the first fight? Can his chin withstand Pascal's counters? Will his mind be preoccupied by fears of another robbery? Will Father Time finally bag Hopkins?

JEAN PASCAL

Defense

His lively legs play a pivotal role in terms of keeping opponents at arm's length while giving him time to plot his next moves … Often circles with hands dangling at his waist but is quick to bring them up when opponents enter the danger zone … Slips punches well with his head and occasionally adopts a rope-a-dope stance along the strands off which he launches counters.

Style

A fleet-footed boxer with two-fisted power and excellent counterpunching … Patterned his style after Roy Jones, but, unlike Jones, he uses the jab often but boasts far less one-punch power … Tends to ignore the body and often fights in spectacular spurts … Pascal's punch output has dipped to dangerously low levels, which almost cost him against Hopkins … His past problems with stamina—most notably against Froch—may explain his spotty work rate.

The Questions

Can Pascal assert his youth and speed to neutralize Hopkins' smarts? Will he be tempted to "make a statement" to counteract his sub-par performance in December, especially in front of his raucous partisans? Will he pick up his work rate?

THE OUTCOME

Hopkins fought at his very best in their first fight, while an overly respectful Pascal had an off night. The stinging post-fight criticism combined with a supportive crowd and the benefit of 12 previous rounds with Hopkins will help Pascal capture a close but more definitive decision.

PHOTO BY JAVIER CENTENO/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

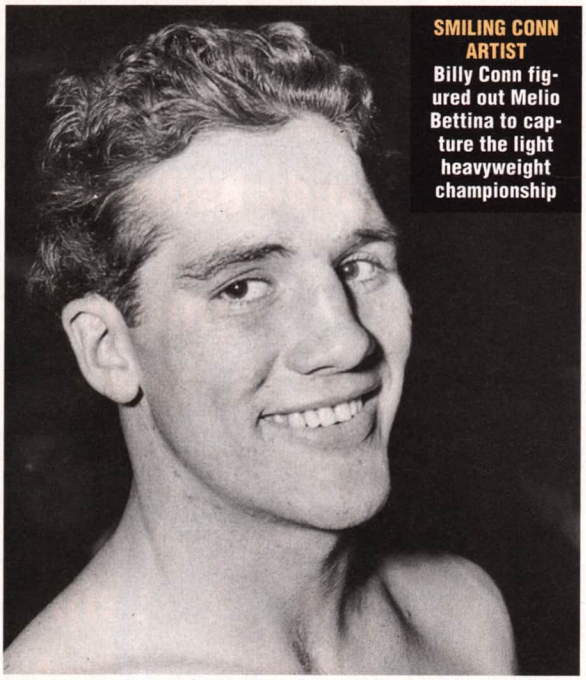
AND THE WINNER IS …
Jean Pacal

September 1939

WORLD CHAMPIONS

For the period ended July 13, 1939

Heavyweight	**Lightweight**
Joe Louis	Henry Armstrong
Light Heavyweight	**Featherweight**
John Henry Lewis	Joey Archibald
Middleweight	**Bantamweight**
Vacant	Sixto Escobar
Welterweight	**Flyweight**
Henry Armstrong	Vacant



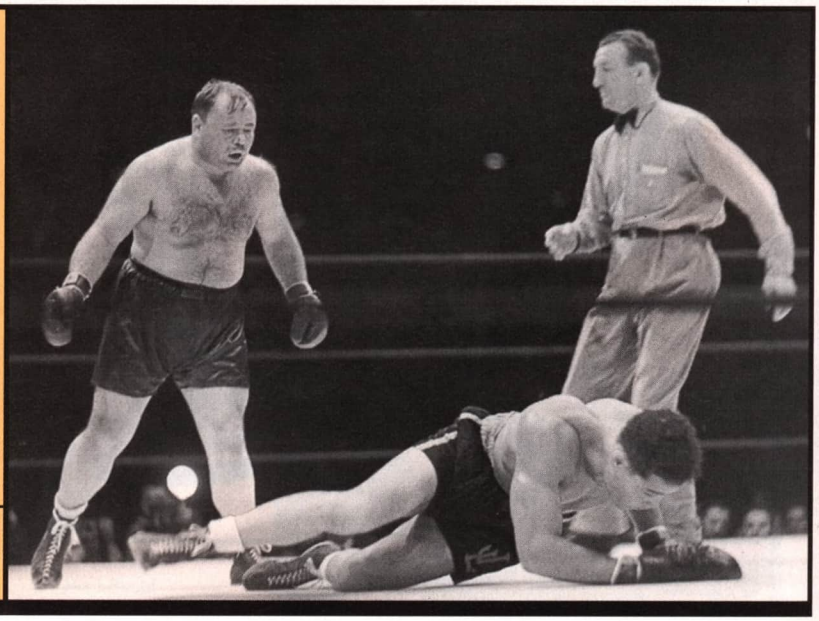
SMILING CONN ARTIST
Billy Conn figured out Melio Bettina to capture the light heavyweight championship

COVER STORY: In **"Brown Bomber In Miniature,"** Gene Vinassa reaches back to find the genesis of rising middleweight star Cerefino Garcia and his fabled bolo punch. Vinassa paints a nice portrait of a young man who finds an early calling in of all places—a funeral. "Cerefino Garcia, barefooted, brown-skinned youngster, was among the seemingly endless horde of Filipinos and foreigners who filed silently past the bier of the immortal Pancho Villa in far away Manila late in 1925," writes Vinassa. Garcia was in his teens at the time, but carried enough prescience to feel that he'd "carry on for him—do even bigger things." It's an interesting tale of how Garcia, the son of poor parents, labored in the sugar cane fields. It's where young Garcia honed his famous punch, "wielding a cane-knife in which the sweet-fibered stalks are severed by the precise hooked arc of the sharp blade became the foundation of his widely publicized and devastating bolo punch." Vinassa explains how Garcia lost his "glass jaw" stature and that "the potency of his bolo punch and a vastly improved ring technique, coupled with the ultimate in conditioning effort, make him one of the real standouts of the era." It looks like Vinassa was correct. Garcia went on to become the first Filipino middleweight world champion by defeating Fred Apostoli and went on to post a 103-27-12 (68) career record, retiring in 1945. Garcia is not in the Hall of Fame. He did have one interesting side job after his boxing career, however, as the driver and bodyguard for actress Mae West.

"Just How Good Is This Man Joe Louis?" by Hype Igoe questions just how good "The Brown Bomber" is. Igoe conjures what seem like contrived "flaws." For example, Igoe questions just how hard Louis punched since "nearly every one of Joe's knockout victories the victim has got up and the fight has been stopped as the hapless fellow swayed, helpless, in danger of real injury, had Louis struck again," Igoe writes. "None of them would have regained their feet had [Bob] Fitzsimmons been doing the hitting." Igoe couldn't have been more wrong. Louis went on to establish a record 25 heavyweight title defenses that stands to this day, stopping 23 of 27 opponents in title fights, including five former world champions.

"Conn World Champ in US" by Nat Fleischer describes how Billy Conn captured the vacant light heavyweight world championship after losing the first five rounds to Melio Bettina. "But Billy worked out his own solution to the problem. He suddenly realized that, by moving to the left, he could get Bettina off balance," writes Fleischer. The tactic led to Conn's victory and was the first step to a Hall of Fame career. ■

"Two-Ton's Showing Develops Hysteria" by Daniel M. Daniel writes what is a byplay between two gents talking about the Joe Louis-Tony Galento fight, one older, one younger. The story alludes to Louis not being that popular, and the wild hysteria caused when Galento knocked down Louis in the third round. Through Daniel's writing, one of the characters says about Louis that "he isn't the popular type. He is no mixer. He is no smiler. He fights and then he disappears. He never does anything to bring attention to himself." With the specter of Jack Johnson stalking him, Louis rigorously followed a number of self-imposed tenets, all designed to disconnect Louis as much as possible from the flamboyant Johnson.

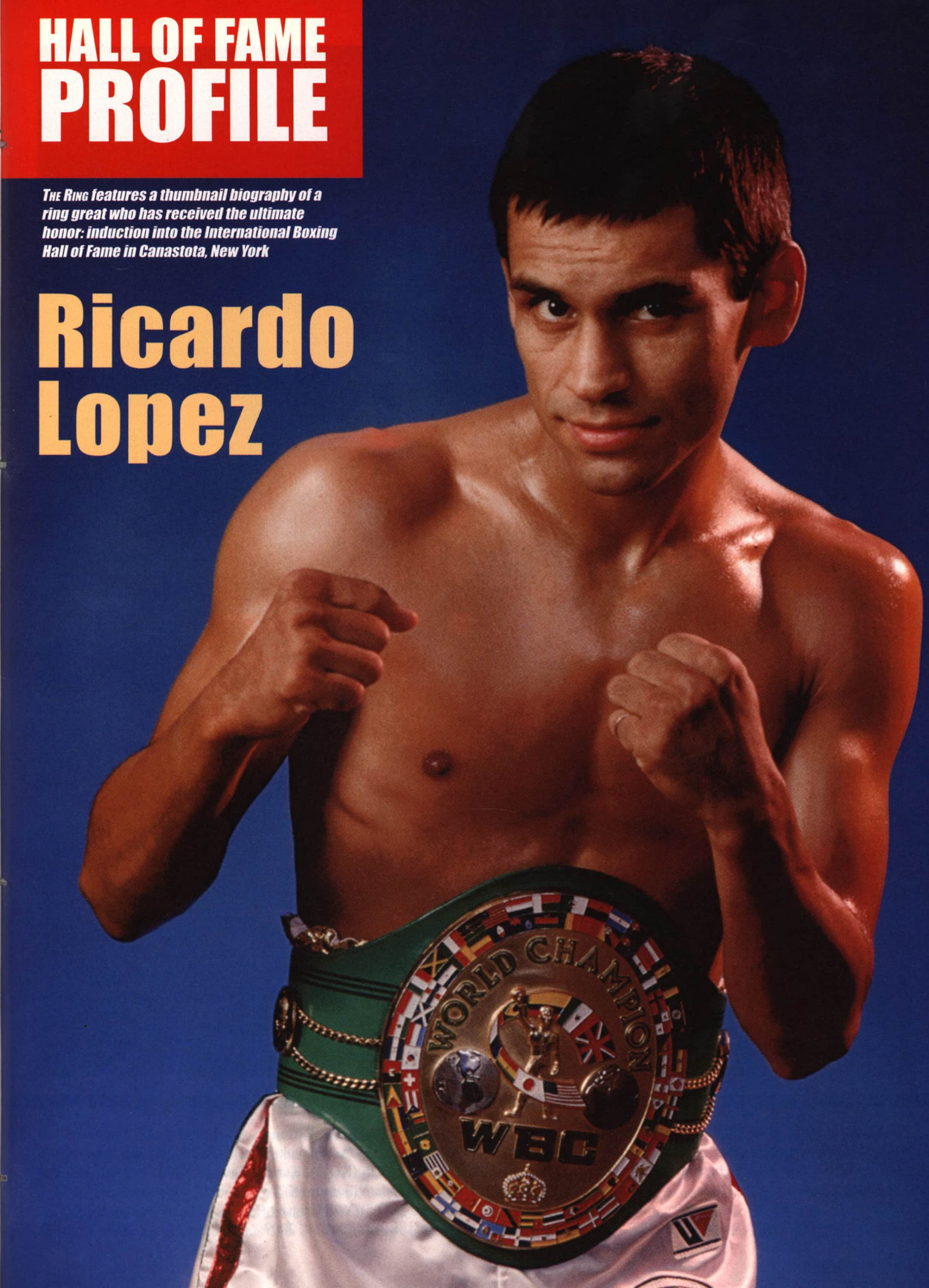


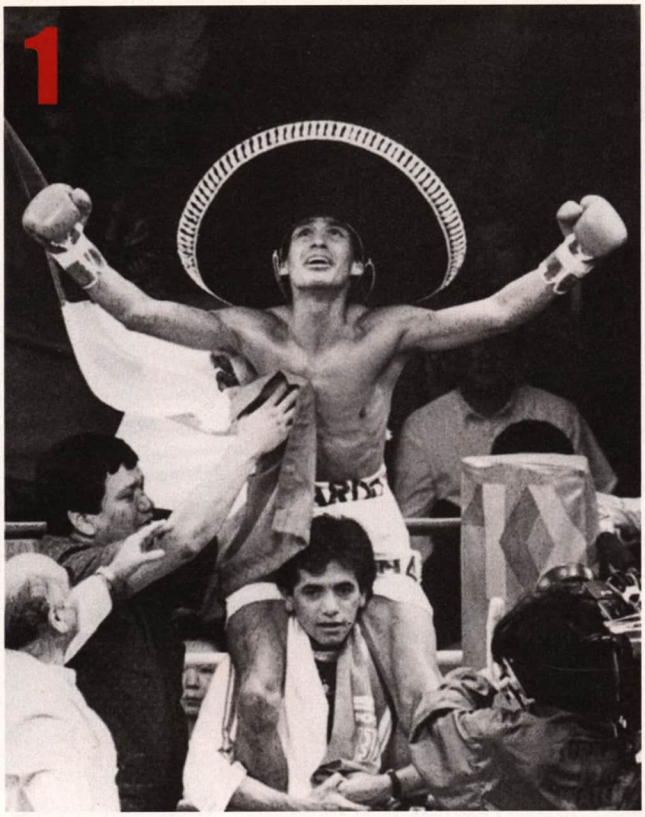
TONY THE TIGER
Tony Galento had the boxing world abuzz with his third-round knockdown of Louis

HALL OF FAME PROFILE

The Ring features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Ricardo Lopez





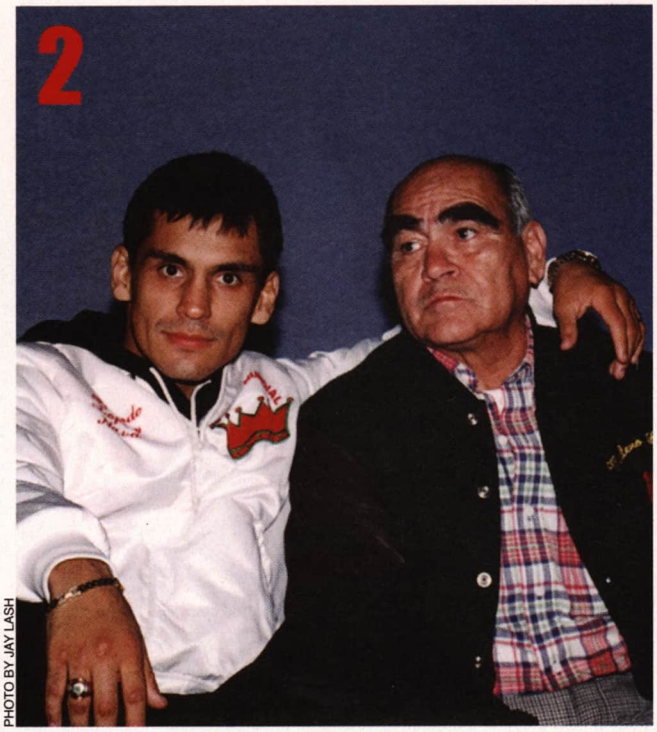


PHOTO BY JAY LASH

PHOTO BY JAY LASH

Birthdate: July 25, 1966
Birthplace: Cuernavaca, Mexico
Weight Classes: Strawweight, Junior Flyweight
Nickname: El Finito
Record: 51-0-1 (38)
Titles Held: WBC, WBA Strawweight, IBF Junior Flyweight

Best Performances: Rosendo Alvarez (D 12, W 12), Saman Soraturung (KO 2), Hideyuki Ohashi (KO 5), Kyung-Yun Lee (W 12), Rocky Lin (KO 2), Kermin Guardia (W 12), Andy Tabanas (KO 12), Ala Villamor (KO 8), Monkol Charoen (W 12), Alex Sanchez (KO 5), Will Grigsby (W 12), Zolani Petelo (KO 8)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 2007

PHOTO BY BRENT COOK

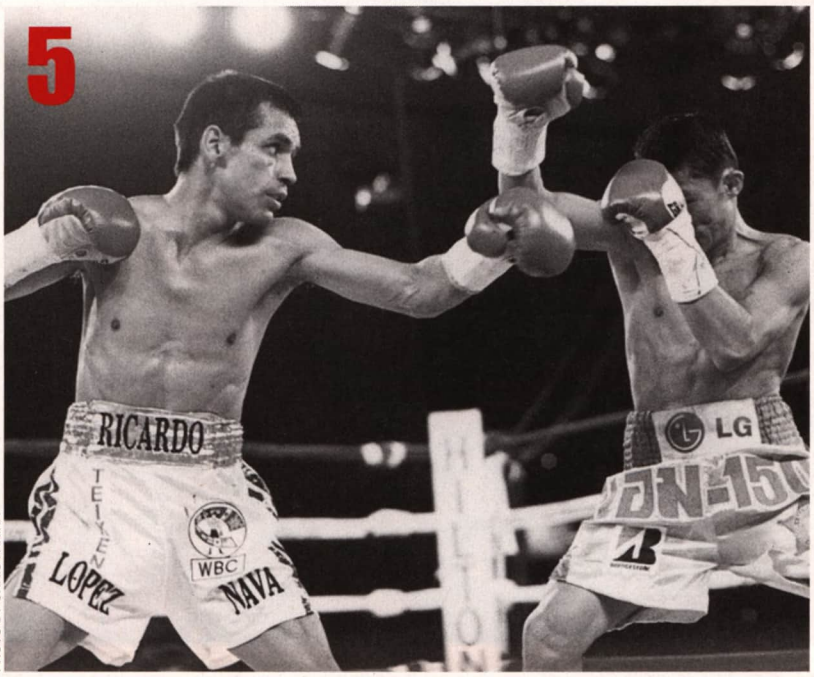


PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

1. WINNING THE TITLE
Lopez celebrates his fifth-round TKO of Hideyuki Ohashi to win the WBC strawweight title, which he held for a remarkable nine years and 21 defenses.

2. FIGHTER AND FATHER
Lopez relaxes with his father, Magdeleno, who bought him his first pair of boxing gloves and encouraged him to take up the sport.

3. TRAINING HARD
Lopez works the speedbag during a workout for his May 1994 defense against Kermin Guardia in Las Vegas, which Lopez won via 12-round unanimous decision.

4. EASY NIGHT'S WORK
Lopez put an end to Myung-Sup Park's title bid in the very first round of their 1996 match in Indio, California.

5. GOING THE DISTANCE
Thailand's Mongkol Chareon went 12 rounds with Lopez in their 1997 title fight in Las Vegas, but he lost the decision by wide scores of 119-108 and 120-107 (twice).

Background: Tallied 37-1 amateur record, including winning the 1984 Mexican Golden Gloves … Turned pro on January 18, 1985, in his hometown of Cuernavaca, Mexico, scoring a third-round knockout and starting a 52-fight undefeated streak that eventually made him one of a handful of world titleholders to retire without a loss … Made his US debut in his 25th bout, knocking out Jorge Rivera in Dallas, Texas, in March 1990 … Won WBC strawweight title by knocking out Hideyuki Ohashi on October 25, 1990, in Tokyo, Japan … He would go on to tally a division-record 21 consecutive title defenses, including five more fights in Asia: two in Japan, two in South Korea, and one in Thailand … By the time he won the title, Lopez had developed into a masterful boxer-puncher under the

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

6. ALVAREZ ACTION
Hard-hitting Rosendo Alvarez was Lopez' toughest opponent. They fought a bloody technical draw in their first fight, but Lopez won a controversial, split decision in the rematch (pictured), which was another give-and-take affair.

7. NUMBER TWENTY-ONE
Lopez rocks Ratanapol Sor Vorapin en route to a third-round TKO in January 2000. It was Lopez' final defense of the 105-pound title.

8. THE ULTIMATE HONOR
Lopez tries on his International Boxing Hall of Fame ring during the 2007 induction weekend in Canastota, New York.

guidance of trainer Nacho Beristain, who would eventually join his pupil in the International Boxing Hall of Fame. He moved gracefully and attacked with speed and precision. The left hook was his money punch, he had a complete arsenal of punches … "Beautiful to watch, Lopez uses a stiff, accurate jab, good combination punching, and can take out an opponent with a single blow," wrote Patrick Myler in his book, *A Century Of Boxing Greats*. "He has a tight defense and never loses his composure" … His second-round knockout of Saman Sorjaturong in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, was especially notable because Sorjaturong would go on to win the WBC junior flyweight title and made 10 successful defenses … Two of the Mexican's most memorable bouts came against WBA strawweight beltholder Rosendo Alvarez of Nicaragua. Their first fight, on March 7, 1989, in Mexico City, ended in a controversial

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

eight-round technical draw in a brawl that appeared to be going Alvarez' way when it was stopped due to cuts caused by accidental headbutts … The rematch, on November 18, 1998, in Las Vegas, was another give-and-take war in which Lopez won a split decision and the WBA belt … Relinquished the 105-pound titles and moved up to junior flyweight in his next bout, winning the IBF strap with a 12-round decision over Will Grigsby … Only fought once in 2002, and had his final bout on September 29, 2001, knocking out Zolani Petelo at Madison Square Garden … Noticing that his reflexes were slowing, he announced his retirement on November 28, 2002, at a press conference in Mexico City, saying: "I saved money from the ring for my family. I didn't want to be a great champion in a psychiatric hospital" … Currently works as a broadcaster for the Televista network.

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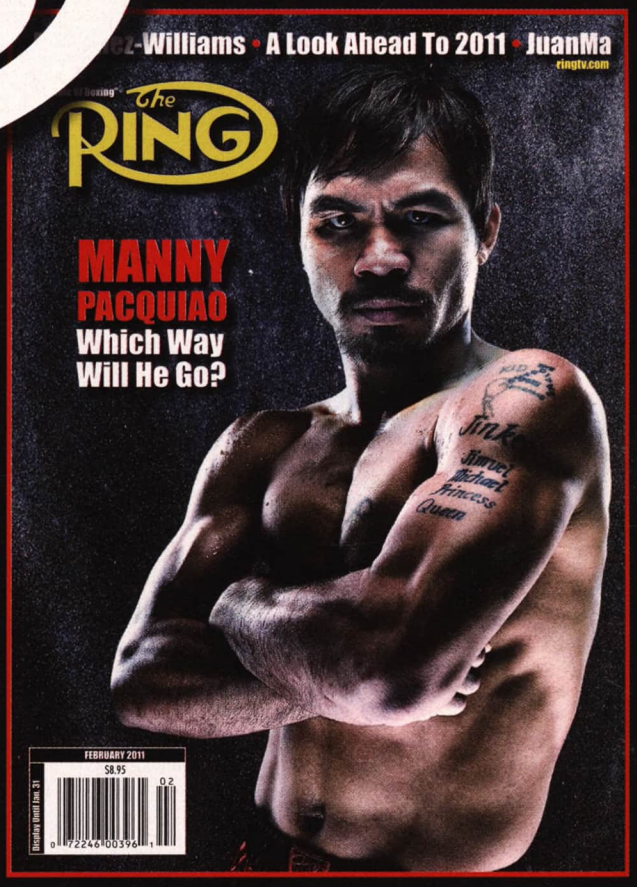

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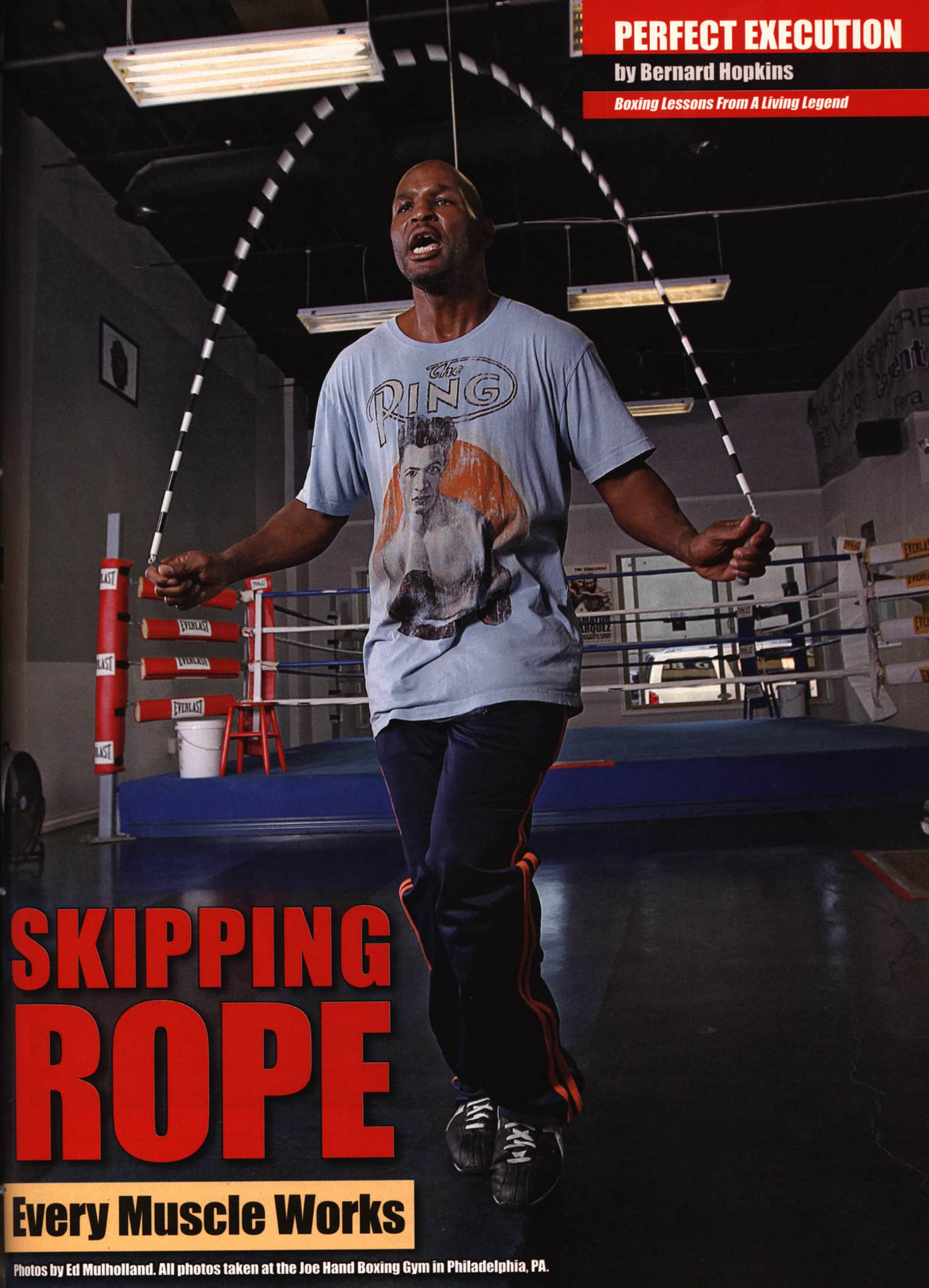


SKIPPING ROPE

Every Muscle Works

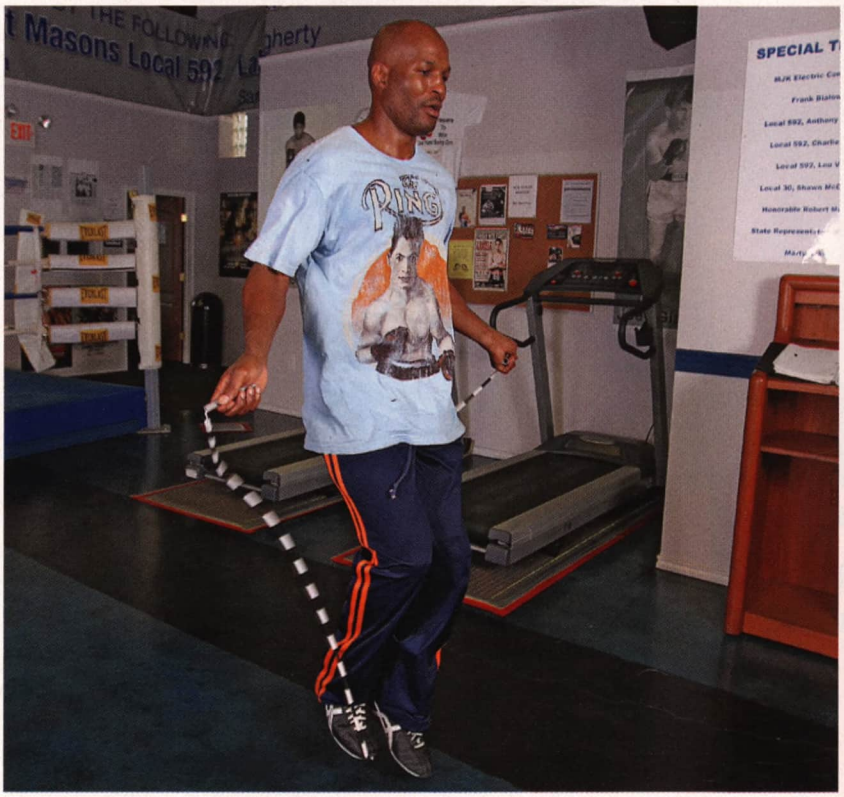
Photos by Ed Mulholland. All photos taken at the Joe Hand Boxing Gym in Philadelphia, PA.

Skipping rope is another one of those exercises fighters have been doing forever. There's film of Jim Jeffries skipping rope before fighting Jack Johnson! Even then, fighters knew rope-skipping is one of the best exercises a boxer can do because it works all the muscles a fighter needs—arms, shoulders, wrists, legs. Plus, it gets your heart beating, warms up your whole body, and gets air in your lungs. Every muscle in your body goes to work when you're skipping rope.

Skipping rope is also for your hand-eye coordination. Your brain, eyes, legs, and arms all have to work together to make that rope spin, and the faster you jump, the harder they have to work—just like they have to work together in the ring. If you do your homework, get your footwork down, and know how to move in the ring, skipping rope will make it even better. It teaches you to be light on your feet and to move your feet and legs quickly.

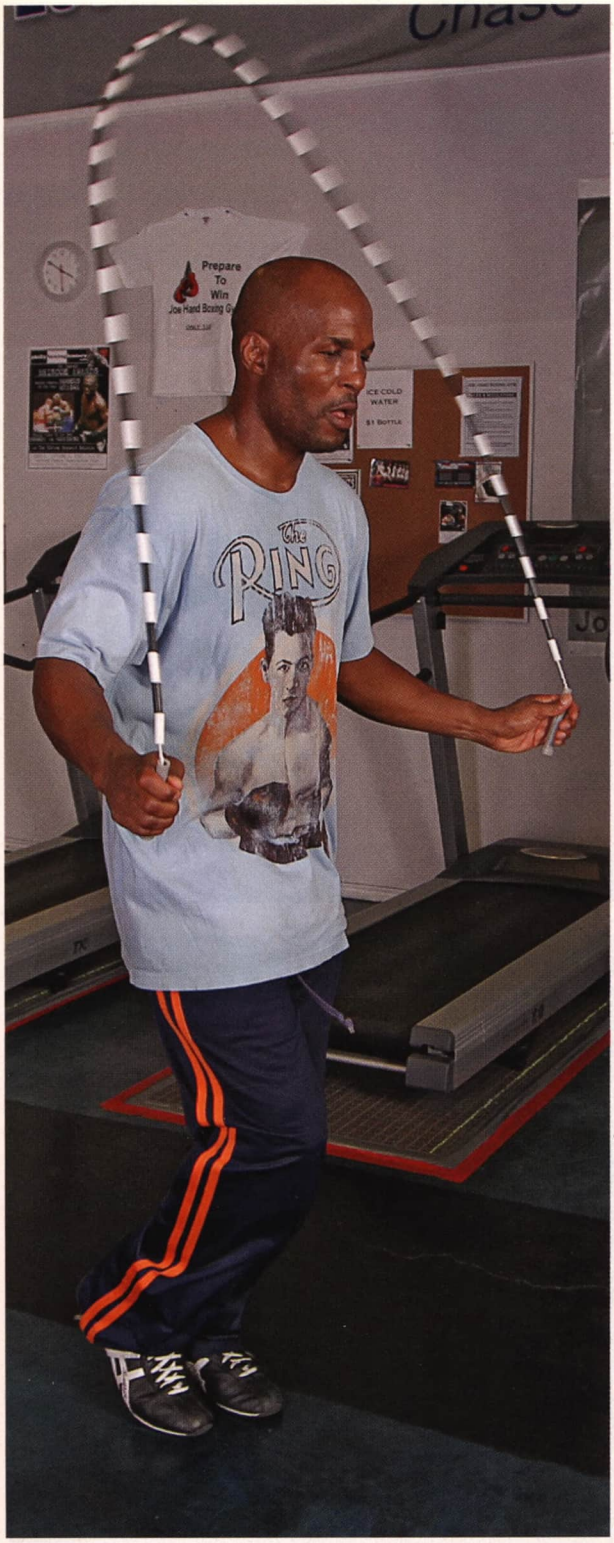
Jump rope for about 15 minutes to get a good workout or to warm up. Some fighters listen to music while they skip rope. I don't. I don't want to be a slave to the music. Plus, what do you do when the music stops? Remember, when you're training for a fight, you're training your mind as much as your body. Both have to be strong. I keep my mind on what I'm doing and why I'm doing it. I hate every piece of equipment in the gym including the rope. I hate all of them because they all give me pain and make me work, but that's what they're there for. That's how you get ready to fight.

BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.



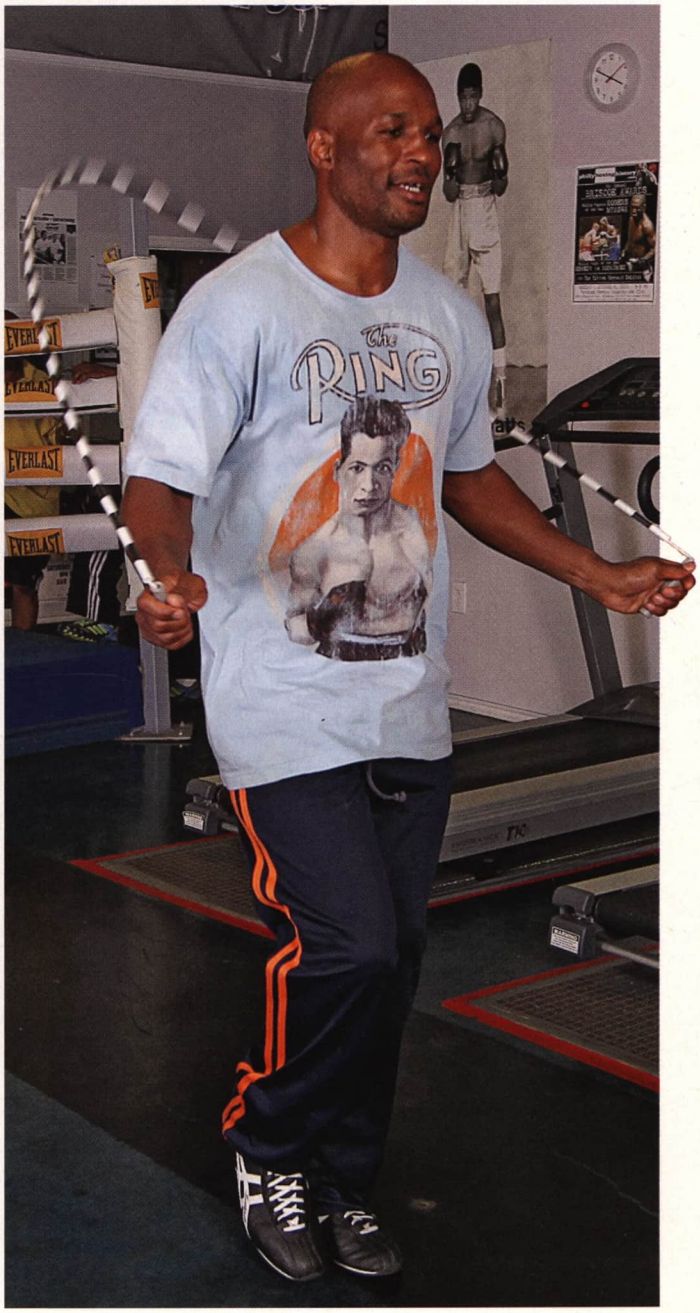
RUN IN PLACE

Start out by just running in place while you twirl the rope. You don't have to do anything fancy. One foot after the other while the rope passes underneath. When you first start, you probably won't be able to do more than 30 seconds without tripping or getting tired. But keep at it. Your coordination and your endurance will get better as you go along, and you'll be able to do different things with the rope.



USE WHAT YOU'VE GOT

You should try to find a rope that's not too long or too short, one that when you step on it with both feet and pull up, your arms form an "L." But if you can't, use what you've got. This rope is too short for me. So what? I have to adjust. You have to adjust in a fight too. You have to get used to being uncomfortable. That's part of boxing. Also, what do you do if they don't have the right size rope in the gym—not skip rope that day? You've still got to do it. Use what you've got.

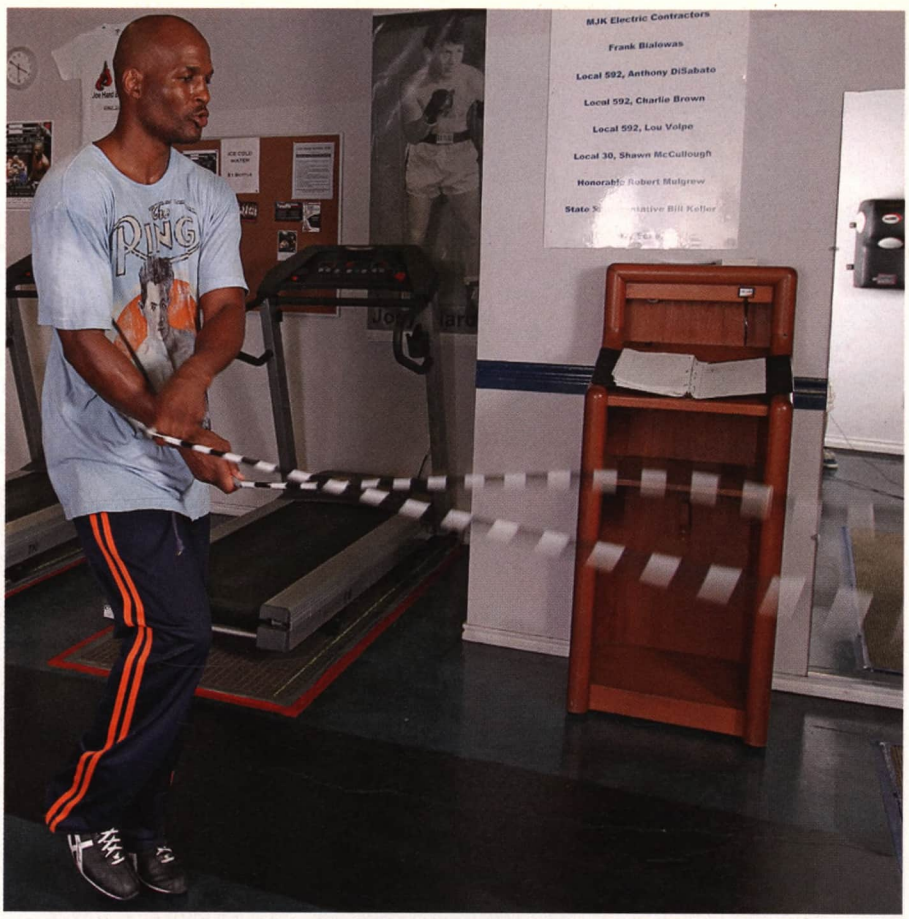


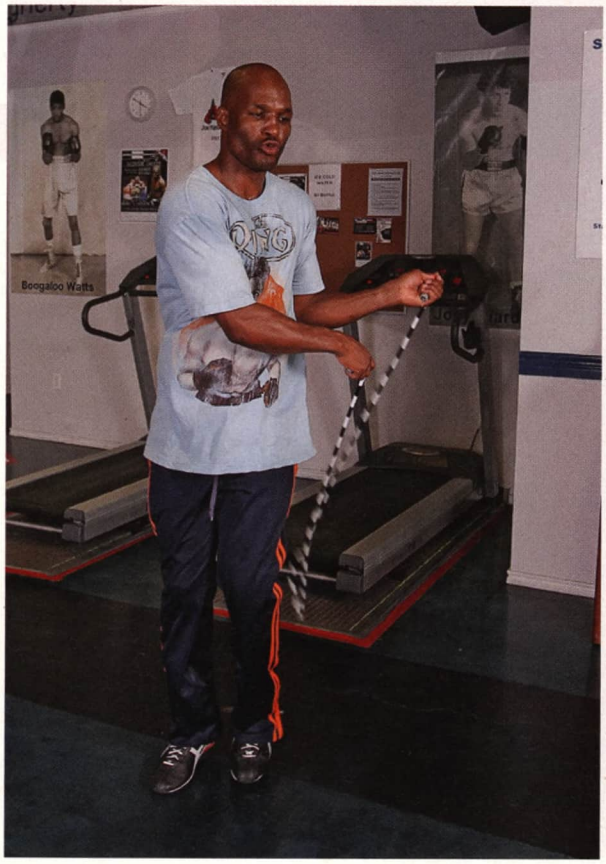
JUMP ON A PADDED SURFACE

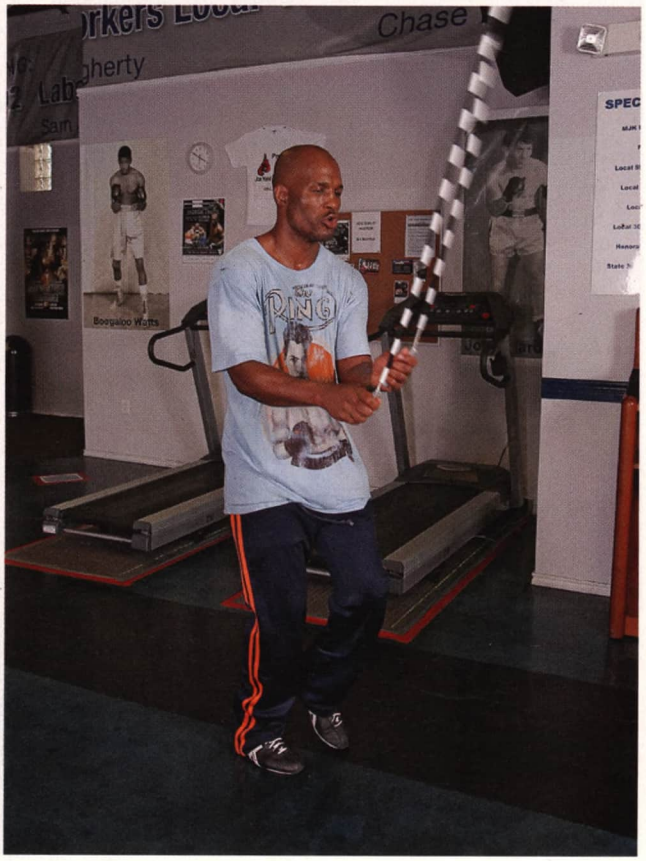
Some fighters like the sound the rope makes on a hard wood or cement floor. Make sure *you* skip rope on a padded floor. Every time you jump, you're coming down hard on your knees and the rest of the joints and bones in your legs and feet. Over time, this will give you problems. You want some cushion to absorb some of that impact.

HAVE SOME FUN

You're not going to do the same thing with the rope forever. It gets monotonous. Have some fun with it. It doesn't matter if you're not jumping every second, as long as you're still moving. So make the rope do some tricks, but keep your feet moving. Don't stand still. You don't get a chance to stand still in a fight, so don't do it while you're skipping rope. Break up the monotony, but keep moving.

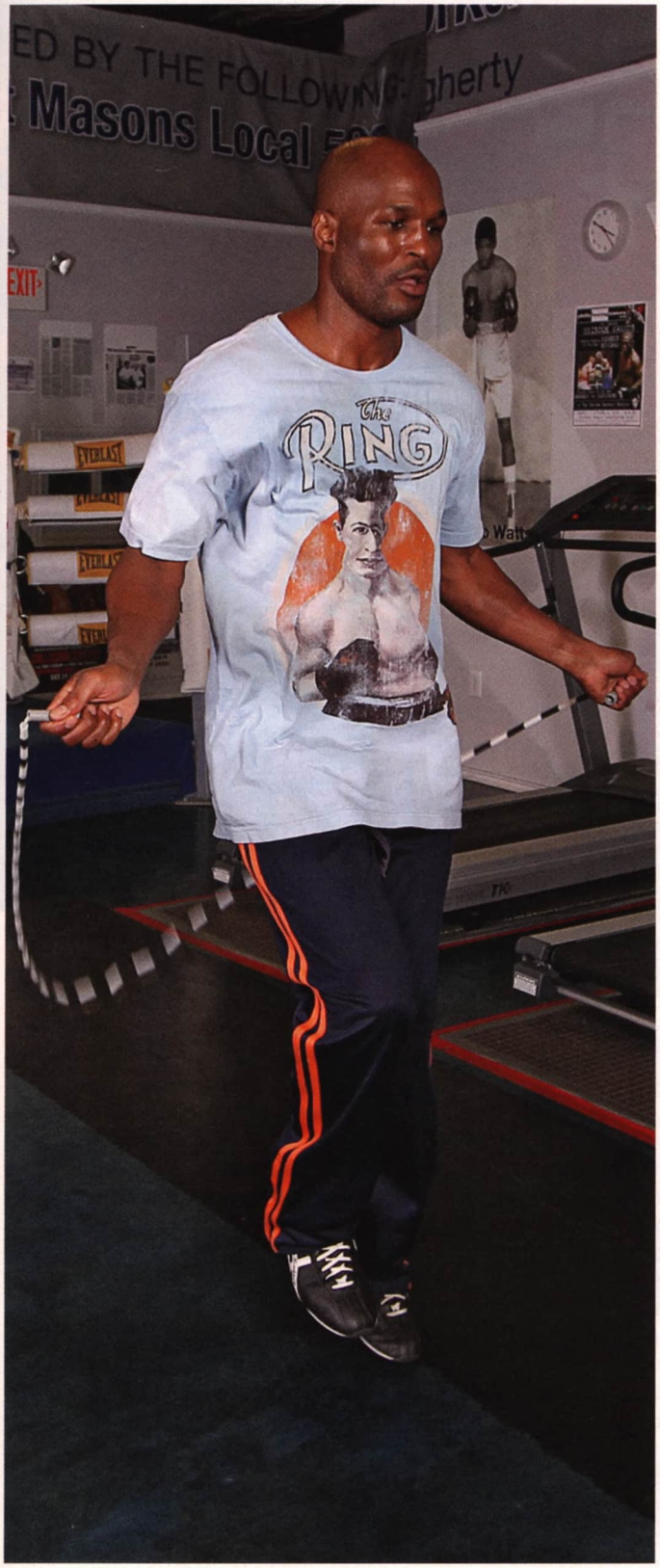


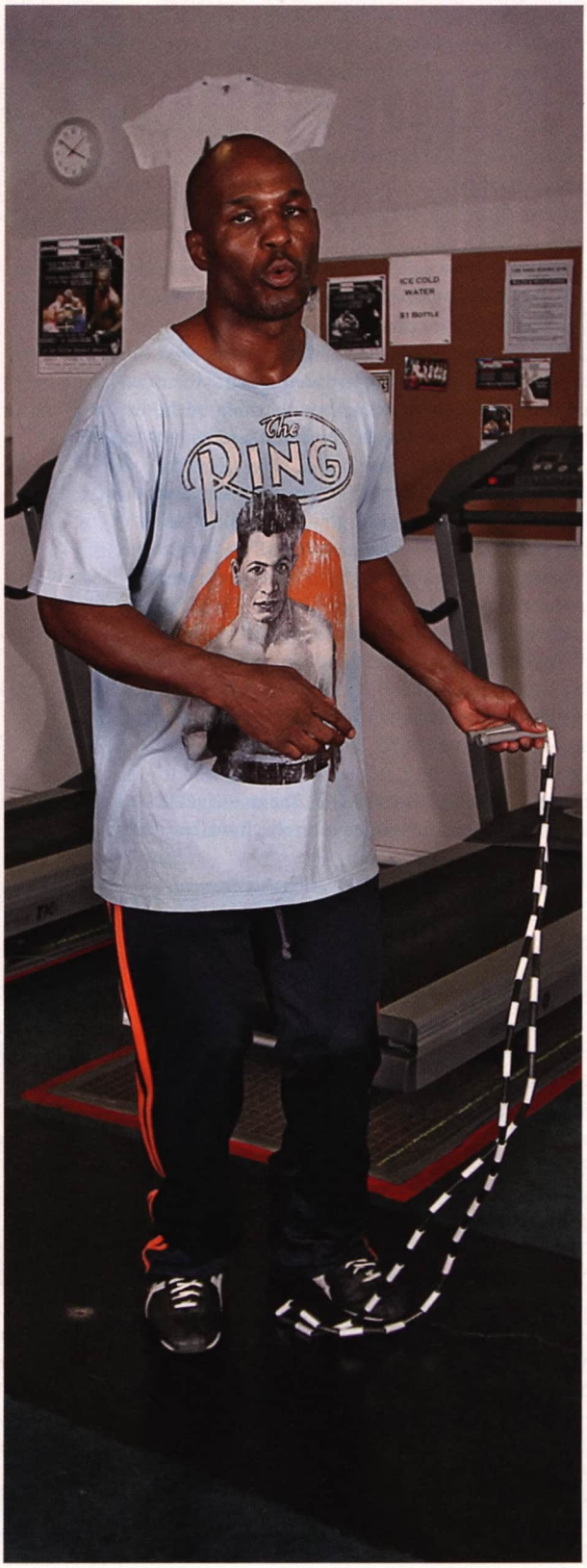




KEEP YOUR HEAD IN THE GAME

Don't let your mind wander. Remember what you're doing and why you're doing it. If you've got a fight coming up, think about what your opponent is doing while you're skipping rope. Is he working harder than you are? Is he skipping faster? Is he running farther or paying more attention to his coach than you are? Everything you do in the gym is to get you ready to fight. Don't waste it. You do, and you'll be sorry on fight night.





By Michael Rivest

Rising Star Amir Imam

PHOTO BY SARA RIVEST

When 20-year-old Amir Imam climbs into a ring in upstate New York these days, conversations stop in mid-sentence, and folks who thought about leaving their chairs don't. When you sit before a burning bush, you don't think about going to the bathroom.

"It's a privilege just to watch him," said a grateful fan before a recent bout. "It's like when we saw Tyson starting out and just knew," he continued. "It'll be fun to say we saw Amir 'when.'"

Hyperbole? Sure. But this much is certain: Imam is special and not only because of what he is at the moment. "He's better than he was the last you saw him," said Andre Rozier, head of New York City's Coney Island Boxing Club, "and not as good as he will be the next. He hasn't even slowed down developing yet."

Imam's star is rising. It took him all the way to the finals of the 2010 National PAL Tournament. He didn't get the decision, but it's all right; it was just one more day in the classroom.

"He's going to win the US Nationals this year," Rozier predicted. "The Olympic Trials, too, and then at the Olympics after that. That's how good he's becoming. You'll see."

But like so many inner-city youth, Imam's future might have been different than the promising one now before him. The 141-pound sensation trains at Albany, New York's Quail Street Boxing Gym, a place surrounded by more dangerous ways a young man might choose to spend his time.

"The kids who come to our gym face big competition from the streets," said Jerrick Jones, Imam's coach since he was 12 years old. "There are gangs and drugs, just a thousand ways to go wrong."

"I come from a disciplined home," Imam said. "My mom is strict." But still, a good mom is often not enough, especially when it comes to filling the void created by absent fathers.

Yet Sharon Imam hasn't been alone. "Amir has had the gym, especially Jerrick," she said.

"We were there for him throughout some vulnerable years," Jones said, "as we are for all the kids in here. Amir is getting lots of attention now because of his talent, but there are always 40 or so others kids in the gym who depend on us just as he did."

From the start, Imam was special. "We just took to him," said Jones, referring to the entire Quail Street coaching staff, but especially himself and volunteer coach, Jaamel Eaddy. Imam occasionally stays with Eaddy, only because it makes training easier.

"I get up at 4:30 every morning to run with Jaamel," Imam said. "But not in the snow," Eaddy added with a laugh. "Then he runs, and I'm in my truck."

"Hell is right outside the gym door," said Eric Williams, a teacher at Albany High School and, alongside Quail Street staff, mentor to Imam for years. "You know the African proverb about it 'taking a village'?" Williams asked. "Well, that's what Amir had. Except for his Mom, Jerrick, and the gym deserve the credit."

"Once I started coming here, I didn't have time to be with my old friends," Imam said. "Boxing takes all of you."

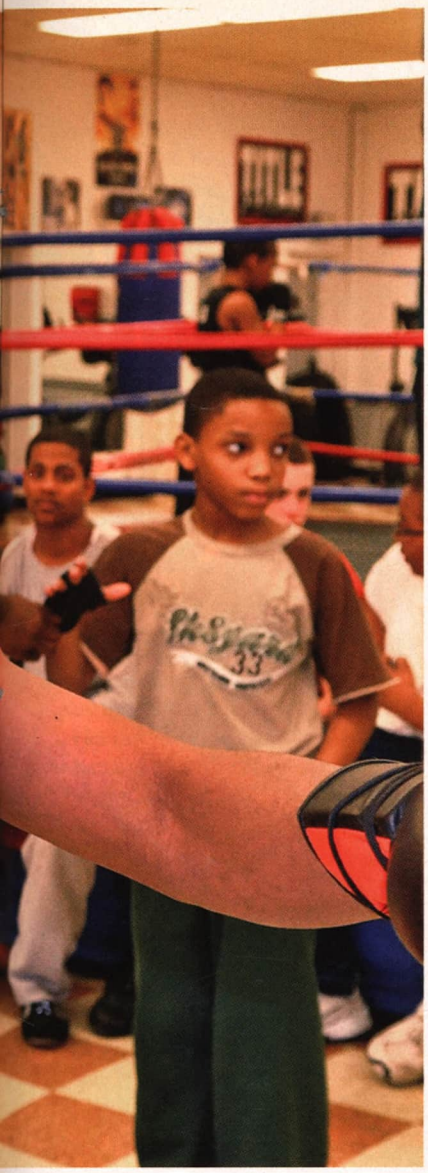
Where are those friends now? "Mostly in jail," he said. "Or dead," added Williams.

"The gym kept me off the streets and gave me lots of reasons to not get involved in other things," said Imam

As he talked, Imam looks down his long, slender arms, one of which sports a tattoo saying volumes in one powerful word. It's a word rarely found in the vocabulary of any 20-year-old, let alone tattooed under the skin of such a gifted one: "Humble."

Imam is humble, and it's a quality that has served him well as he's grown through the stages of his young career.

He's gone from "too small to box," something Jones told him when he first walked into the Gym as a 65-pound 11-year old, to a fine amateur boxer who won an Empire State Games Championship and a National Silver Gloves crown. Today he is a heavy-handed, pro-style puncher who's



GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME
Imam strikes a pose at the Quail Street Boxing Gym

been dropping opponents lately with single, fight-ending bodyshots.

What's the next stage for Amir Imam is the same question the excited crowd has been asking.

You don't train with Jerrick Jones for eight years without growing into something special, even without the prodigious natural gifts Imam possesses. But the combination makes for something that can leave the crowd transfixed in their seats.

As Rozier noted, Imam will be better the next time, and still better the time after that. By the London Olympics in 2012, he may have come far enough to bring home the gold. ■

Michael Rivest can be reached at mrivest2@gmail.com.

POSITIVE INFLUENCE

Ask John D'Antonio what's so special about Albany's Quail Street Boxing Gym and his eyes light up with the enthusiasm of a proud father reaching for his wallet to show off the latest pictures of his kids.

As the city's Parks & Recreation Commissioner, D'Antonio is the driving force behind the gym's opening in March 2000 and its main defender against city council members who would choose other ways to spend the gym's nearly $200,000 annual budget. Boxing for kids? They ask, doubtfully. Don't we have enough problems with youth violence without teaching them to fight?

"We're the only entirely municipally-funded youth boxing gym in the country," D'Antonio said. "Others might get grants or be devoted to a few sports that include boxing, but not us.

"People need to understand that the gym is just a vehicle. We're about building productive citizens. To get a star like Amir [Imam] is great, obviously. Look at the role model he becomes for the other kids."

D'Antonio doesn't have longitudinal studies correlating youth boxing with delinquency prevention. What he does have is common sense and enough anecdotal data to fill a *What Kids Need For Dummies* book.

"I have so many examples of kids whose lives were changed in this gym," he said.

Dr. Raymond Colucciello, Superintendent of Albany City Schools, agrees: "I know the stereotypes: boxing 'causes' violence or somehow teaches the wrong things, but, let me tell you, the opposite has proven true. The kids that are involved are model students and an inspiration to those who aren't involved."

Quail Street Boxing kids learn discipline, focus, patience, respect for themselves and others, the importance of a positive peer group, and the value of being associated with something larger than themselves. They eat healthy foods, they go to bed early, and they don't do drugs.

Juvenile justice professionals know that these are the very things that underlie nonviolent attitudes and behaviors.

"It's why we'll do anything to support this program," said Chris D'Alessandro, Director of Operations for the Albany County D.A.'s Office. "It's why we're planning to partner with the gym to create a special initiative for some first-time offenders."

Fight for Success would provide an alternative to incarceration. "They'd be given an ACOD (Adjourned in Contemplation of Dismissal) and come here instead," D'Alessandro continued. "It makes so much sense."

Yes, it does. Instead of finding "role models" on the streets, Quail Street kids are looking up to Amir Imam and the many other young men and women who would never, ever—in a million years—wind up as a file on D'Alessandro's desk.

POSITIVE INFLUENCE
D'Antonio gives Alvier Lewis a few pointers

PHOTO BY SARA RIVEST

THE SWEETER SCIENCE

By Chris Richards

MEXICO'S FINEST Torres poses at Guzman's Gym in Guadalajara

PHOTO BY GERARDO ZAVALA/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

Mexican Star Ana Maria Torres

Christy Martin was scheduled to face Belgium's Daniella Somers on the undercard of the Julio Cesar Chavez-Miguel Angel Gonzalez card on March 7, 1998, in Mexico City. The fight, however, was removed from the card when city authorities unearthed a 1947 ordinance banning women from fighting professionally. There had been female fights in Mexico before, but the word from the capital was that women should stay out of the ring.

Quite a lot had changed by the time Martin and Somers finally fought in Las Vegas in October 1999. On July 3 of the same year, Ana Maria Torres made her professional debut in Mexico City's Arena Mexico and won a split decision over Mariana Juarez in a tough fight.

The well-matched pair fought to a split draw in December '99, but the 22-year-old Ciudad Nezhualcoyotl native would beat Juarez by unanimous decision in the 2002 rubber match and claim the Mexican female bantamweight title.

It's only fitting that Torres began a rivalry in her very first fight. Torres is athletic, intensely competitive, and admits that she "kind of likes violence." Her original goal was to become a competitive martial artist, but Tae Kwon Do lessons were too much of a strain on her family's budget. So Torres switched to boxing at age 18 with the vociferous support of her mother. Mexico's lack of a well-organized female boxing program meant a very brief amateur career followed by a stretch of serious on-the-job training when Torres turned pro. This attitude allowed her to take her first defeat in stride.

"Defeats," she said, "are part of the sport. You have to learn from them. I learned not to let my personal life interfere with my professional life."

Her first taste of defeat came when she lost the bantam title to Ivonne Munoz in February 2004, but she rebounded by traveling to the United States to stop Lakeysha Williams in North Las Vegas. Then she recaptured the national bantamweight title in 2005 by decisioning Ivonne Munoz.

Torres' first taste of alphabet-title competition was a disheartening experience. North Korean Kwang Ok Kim held the WBC bantamweight title, but the government prohibited North Korean fighters from leaving the country, so Torres had to go to North Korea. One judge thought Torres won a close fight, but the other two disagreed. More frustrating than the loss was the feeling that she was not being allowed to compete.

"When I was hitting her, the referee would stop the round 30 seconds early," Torres said. "It was very discouraging, and I felt I wasn't being given a chance to do my best."

Torres took her frustrations out on her opponents. Dropping from bantam to super flyweight, she won the right to fight for the WBC's 115-pound title with a sixth-round TKO of Mayela Perez. Next, she traveled to the Dominican Republic to challenge titlist Dahiana Santana in April of 2007. This time Torres did not let a hostile environment stand in the way of a win, securing a unanimous decision in Santana's hometown.

PROUD MOMENT
Torres batters German star Graf in front of 12,000 fans in Mexico City

PHOTO BY JAIME LOPEZ/LATIN CONTENT/GETTY IMAGES

Nothing was going to intimidate Torres, but being a titleholder didn't make the competition any easier. Torres' very first defense took her back to North Korea. This time the opponent was Myung Ok Ryu, and, once again, Torres fought a close fight that ended with a disappointing split decision loss. Fortunately, she was able to secure a rematch in front of a friendly audience in Mexico, but staying out of North Korea did not solve her problems. The majority draw in the 2008 rematch was the lowest point of her career.

"The fans supported me, but my promoters undercut me," Torres recalled. "I was told two weeks before the fight that it was off. I wouldn't be fighting. So we broke camp, and I took a break. Then they told me it was back on just three days before the fight."

It was time for a change.

Promoter Hector Garcia had followed Torres' career from the beginning and was eager for the chance to work with such a talented fighter.

"Pound-for-pound," he said, "I think she is the best female fighter in the world." His admiration didn't stop with Torres' talent. Garcia also credits Torres' team for her success. "They are able to come up with a new game plan for every fight and help her be prepared for every fight."

That team consists of husband/manager Roberto Santos and trainer Manuel Lopez. Lopez was no newcomer to women's boxing. He had already trained former Mexican champion Laura Serrano. He stepped into Torres' corner in 2005 and was instrumental in her move down in weight.

"I saw she had dedication and was a total professional," said Lopez. "She had what a lot of men are missing."

The three of them were together for Ana Maria's worst setbacks and are determined to overcome future challenges.

Garcia's faith and her team's support have paid significant dividends. Since her draw with Ryu, Torres has won nine straight, four via knockout. She recaptured the WBC 115-pound title in 2009 and has posted seven consecutive defenses. Her proudest moment was her September 2010 shutout of German star Alesia Graf. Torres said she felt as if she had been cast as the opponent in Graf's boxing movie. "Everyone was disrespecting me," recalled Torres. "They said she was going to win and I didn't have a chance."

The cynics could not have been more wrong. Torres dominanted Graf and scored two knockdowns en route to a unanimous decision by triple scores of 100-88. Graf was simply not in her league. Equally important, the fight broke Mexican TV ratings records and drew a live crowd of approximately 12,000.

By the time you read this, Torres, 24-3-2 (14), should have faced Jackie Nava in a 120-pound catchweight match on April 16. "This may be the toughest fight of my career so far. Jackie is a great fighter," said the 31-year-old Torres in mid-March. "God willing, I know I am good enough to pass the test."

If Torres is victorious, it could lead to an international superfight with Argentine super bantamweight titlist Marcela Acuna, who, like Torres, is her country's biggest female star. ■

COMEBACK DELAYED

Christy Martin was forced to pull out of her March 12 fight with Dakota Stone due to a training injury. Doctors reported on March 5th that Martin sustained a broken rib in training camp. Martin attempted to continue to train with a temporary dressing on the injury, but the pain handicapped her while sparring. Therefore, Martin's trainer, Miguel Diaz, called off what would have been Martin's first fight since September 2009.

By Don Stradley

Heavyweight Deontay Wilder

The birth of a child can be life changing, but, in the case of Alabama's Deontay Wilder, the birth of his daughter Naieya took him all the way to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where he won a bronze medal.

"I think about all I've done already," Wilder said, "And I say, 'Wow!'"

The 6'7" Wilder was a carefree teenager with hopes of playing college basketball when Naieya was born. Wilder's responsibility as a new father was compounded by Naieya being born with spina bifida, a birth defect that sometimes puts a child in a wheelchair. College athletics suddenly seemed frivolous. "She needed me right then," Wilder said.

He gave up his hoop dreams and took on two jobs. When he learned a truck driver made more money than a truck loader, he applied for his commercial license and drove for a local Budweiser distributor. Wilder's search for additional income brought him to boxing.

"I was known for fighting," Wilder said of his days at Tuscaloosa Central High in Alabama. "I was a quiet kid, but people liked to start trouble with me. I knew how to handle myself." But other than having seen a few fights on TV, he knew nothing about boxing. He now laughs at how naïve he was. "I thought *every* boxer made a lot of money."

His plan was to turn pro quickly to pay Naieya's soaring medical costs. But even if he was wrong about boxing's financial promise, entering Tuscaloosa's Skyy Boxing gym "was like Christmas morning. I was in love with it immediately."

Nobody told the then 20-year-old Wilder he was too old to start boxing. All they saw was raw ability. Jay Deas, who refers to himself as Wilder's "coach," noticed that Wilder was a workhorse.

"People talk about his height and his athleticism, but they don't give him enough credit for his work ethic," Deas said. "I'd give him something to work on and then go to another part of the gym to work with someone else. Out of the corner of my eye I watched Deontay. He was working even harder when he didn't think I was watching. That was very unusual. He was working two jobs, and he still had this hunger to succeed."

Impressed with Wilder's motivation and "God-given power," Deas inspired his protégé with DVDs of Tommy Hearns and Larry Holmes. Wilder liked what he saw, particularly the whip-cracking right hand of Hearns. Still, despite the young man's desire to succeed, Wilder's rise through the amateur ranks seemed to surprise people.

"Every step up the ladder, people discounted him, but he kept knocking guys out. For Deontay to win a medal at the Olympics with such little experience was something phenomenal," Deas said.

Wilder was the only American to place in 2008 and the first American heavyweight to medal since Ray Mercer won gold in 1988. And the work ethic never diminished. One week after returning from China, Wilder was back at Skyy Boxing, retiling the bathroom floor.

"I always have to be the best at whatever I do," Wilder said, "whether it's tiling a floor, driving a truck, or dropping opponents. Maybe I get that from my father or grandfather although I never knew them very well."

Wilder retains joint custody of Naieya with her mother and recently had another daughter with his wife, Jessica. "I'm blessed all around," Wilder said. "But I got to keep fighting to take care of this house full of women."

PRO RECORD

2008		
Nov. 15	Ethan Cox, Nashville, TN	KO 2
2009		
March 6	Shannon Grey, Columbus, MS	KO 1
March 14	Richard Green Jr., Cincinnati, OH	KO 1
April 24	Joseph Rabotte, Chicago, IL	KO 1
May 23	Charles Brown, Cincinnati	KO 1
June 26	Kelsey Arnold, Tucson, AZ	KO 1
Aug. 14	Travis Allen, Tucson	KO 1
Nov. 28	Jerry Vaughn, Cincinnati	KO 1
2010		
April 2	Ty Cobb, Las Vegas, NV	KO 1
April 30	Alvaro Morales, Las Vegas	KO 3
July 3	Dustin Nichols, Hattiesburg, MS	KO 1
Sept. 25	Shannon Caudle, Tunica, MS	KO 1
Oct. 15	Harold Sconiers, Indio, CA	KO 4
Dec. 2	Dan Sheehan, Lafayette, LA	KO 1
2011		
Feb. 19	DeAndrey Abron, Tuscaloosa, AL	KO 2

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
15	15	0	0	15

As a pro, Wilder has kayoed all 15 of his opponents. He had a scare against veteran Harold Sconiers last October—after dropping Sconiers twice, Wilder found himself on the canvas.

"I was leaning on the ropes, daydreaming," Wilder said. "I was actually thinking, *I'd better get off these ropes*, when he caught me on the neck." Wilder stopped Sconiers in the next round. "I'm not ashamed of being knocked down. That's where the heart comes in. I want to throw the right hand like Tommy Hearns, but I also want to show people I have the fighting heart of Muhammad Ali."

Deas has focused on improving Wilder's footwork and defense. He occasionally invites former welterweight titlist and amateur legend Mark Breland to help.

"My ego isn't so big that I won't bring in other people," said Deas, chuckling. "You have to consider, combining Deontay's amateur fights with his pro fights, his total ring experience adds up to barely four hours."

Deas hopes to match Wilder against a "good journeyman" by the end of 2011. Deas also is pursuing high-level sparring for Wilder. "When you have to pay for your mistakes, you tend to correct them," said Deas, who believes a tall sparring mate like Wilder would be perfect for fighters such as David Haye and Tomasz Adamek as they are nearing bouts with the gigantic Klitschkos.

"I learned a lot sparring with Alonzo Butler," Wilder said. "If I made a mistake, he'd punish me. I ended up busting a ligament in his eye. I felt bad, but that's how I am. I lay it on you."

Working with Golden Boy Promotions, Deas feels Wilder can do what Virgil Hill once did for Bismarck, North Dakota, and turn

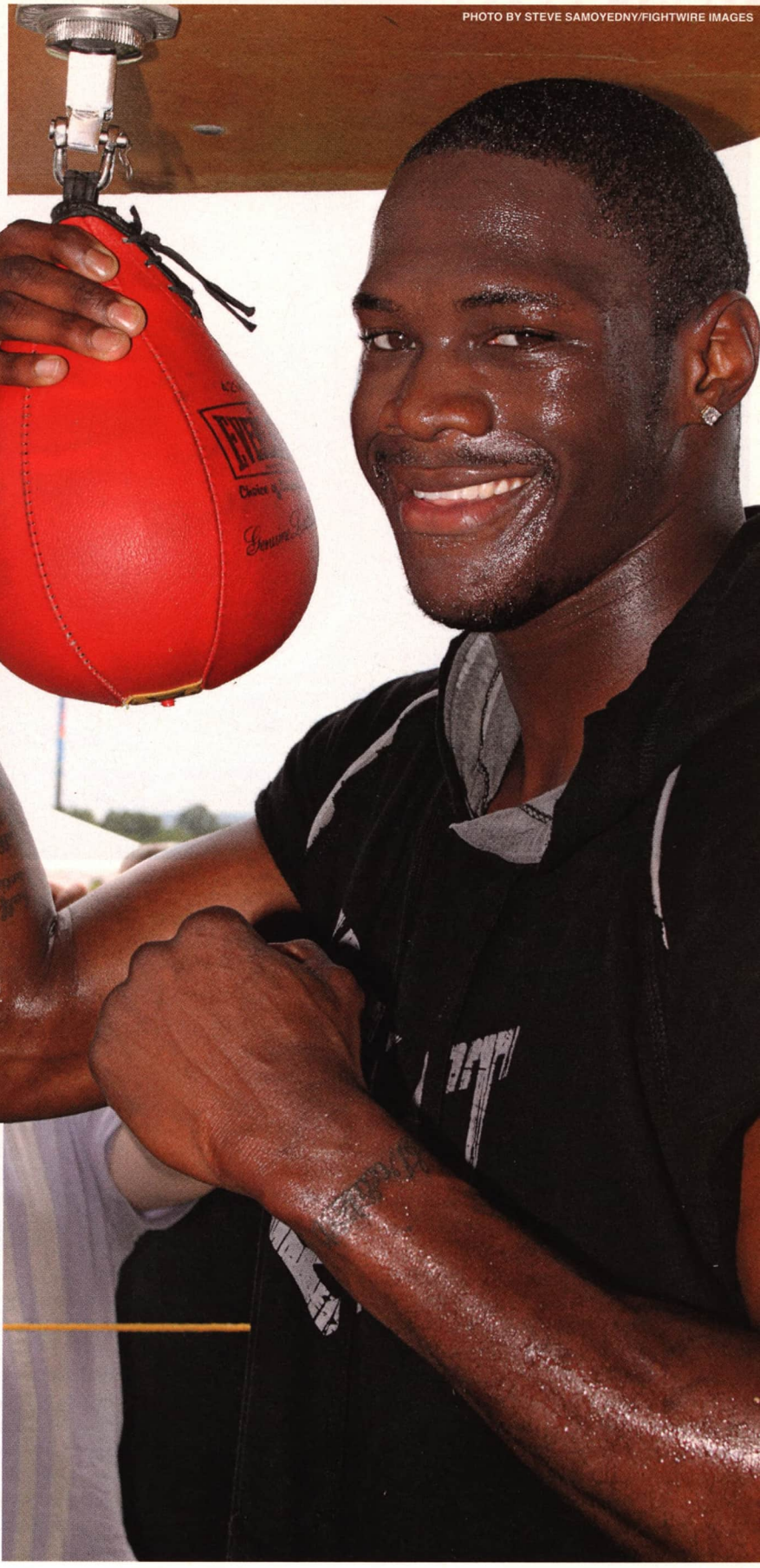


PHOTO BY STEVE SAMOYEDNY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Tuscaloosa into a major fight town. A recent Tuscaloosa show saw Wilder blow out DeAndrey Abron in less than two rounds at the Umphrey Center on the Shelton State campus. It was the first professional boxing event in Alabama in nearly six years and the first under the newly created Alabama Boxing Commission, an official sanctioning body created largely to accommodate the state's new star. The night was a smash.

"A lot of people made it happen," said Wilder. "I was just the face on the cereal box."

As Aaron Suttles of Tuscaloosanews.com described it, "Black sat amongst white, the young with the old. Girlfriends held hands with doting boyfriends, wives with husbands. The upper class rubbed elbows with the middle and vice versa all along the socioeconomic ladder. They came from the West End and from North River. It didn't matter if you were attending your first boxing match or your 100th, this night was special."

It was as fine a homecoming as Wilder could've asked for. Even so, he dreams of more.

"I want to be the old man with a lot of stories," Wilder said.

He already has a story, though. It's something out of Damon Runyon with a slice of Cinderella Man. It centers on the tiny girl who inadvertently started it all.

Naieya recently celebrated her sixth birthday. Doctors had said she probably wouldn't walk, but, after several surgeries, she is running and playing. Aside from a slight difficulty walking, she's living a very normal life.

"We didn't baby her, and that helped," Wilder said. "We never treated her as a *special* child. You should see her now. She's smart, she has a sense of humor, and she can speak a little Chinese and Spanish. She's excited about this little graduation ceremony coming up at her school. The other night she said, 'Daddy, I'm moving on up.' I get teary-eyed thinking about all she's been through. I'm teary-eyed right now." ■

by Margaret Goodman, M.D.

A WORD TO THE WISE
Garcia has only been working with Donaire for two fights, but the improvement has been obvious

Teamwork

Although a boxer stands alone in the ring, Nonito Donaire recognizes that it is a team sport. Besides his supreme skill, the three-division titleholder has put together a team that places him far beyond most, if not all challengers.

Donaire's trainer, Robert Garcia, is considered to be one of today's best. He understands a trainer does not have to force his will upon his fighter to see positive results. Garcia, who has trained Fernando Vargas, Antonio Margarito, and Brandon Rios, began working with Donaire before his December 2010 fight against Volodymyr Sydorenko. Although no one can dispute the significance of a great trainer, the 28-year-old Donaire enters the ring with four other great minds alongside him:

Former BALCO chief Victor Conte, who once assisted athletes in performance-enhancing drug use and is currently advancing anti-doping policies, had a fateful meeting with Donaire early last year. "Nonito's wife's parents and I live in the same city," said Conte. "He was sitting in a local bank filling out a deposit slip, and the bank manager introduced us."

Conte now runs SNAC (Scientific Nutrition for Advanced Conditioning), a respected legal nutritional supplement program. Following thorough research, Donaire asked Conte to assist him with a supplement regimen.

"Nonito had the worst diet in the world," said Conte. "He would go all day without eating, perhaps until 4:30 PM, and no one would remind him. I designed a nutritional program with supplements as well as a meal replacement."

Donaire also undergoes blood testing to insure an optimal balance between training and recovery intervals.

"We started using a Memory Belt that measures heart rate, ventilation (the rate at which air enters and leaves the lungs), VO2 max (aerobic capacity), caloric expenditure, and breaths-per-minute," said Conte. "Now, Nonito understands the need for recovery. Sometimes he knows the best use of his time is to sleep, recover, and heal."

Donaire is very informed and utilizes this knowledge to make him stronger. "Growing up, I was a six-day-a-week boxer, but I would get sick or hurt before a fight. This is where Victor comes in. He reminds me of the recovery aspect. I have learned to listen to my body. It is working smart, and then you enjoy boxing more."

Conte's other work with Donaire includes simulated high altitude or hypoxic training. Hypoxic training began in the 1940s. It was a technique used to prepare Russian aviators that had to fly in unpressurized cabins. In the 1980s, athletes began to sleep at elevation and train at lower levels. The third generation of hypoxic training included sleeping in altitude-mimicking tents and training at sea level.

Conte recognized it was bad for boxers to sleep in tents as it made them oxygen deficient while increasing their heart rate. As a result, they would burn more calories, go into a catabolic state, and then lose strength and speed. So, he began utilizing IHT (intermittent hypoxic training) with Donaire. It stimulates larger red blood cells and vessel adaptation without the risk of producing too many red blood cells that could lead to heart attack or stroke.

"IHT helps your body become more energy efficient and improves oxygen uptake and utilization, delaying the onset of lactic acid production and increasing endurance," said Conte.

Donaire's three other team members include Mike Bazzel, a Northern California conditioning expert. They work out together at Brian Schwartz' Undisputed Boxing Gym in San Carlos, California, just down the street from SNAC.

"In the beginning, Nonito couldn't throw a left hook due to shoulder and back pain," said Bazzel. "He would be great for three to four days and then uncomfortable. So, we strengthened his lower back. I started with hips, abs, lower back—core work—and then incorporated squats and lunges. Every training camp we come up with something different. We pick a theme before each fight. Before the [Fernando] Montiel fight, we watched the 1981 Salvador Sanchez-Wilfredo Gomez fight. Sanchez hurt Gomez going into the second round. Nonito already had the seed planted he wanted to stop Montiel early."

Remi Korchemny, a PhD in exercise physiology from the Ukraine, came to the US following the 1972 Olympics and has worked as a coach and advisor for many high-profile athletes, including British sprinter Dwain Chambers. After also suffering the repercussions from the BALCO scandal, Korchemny has moved on and now works with Donaire.

PHOTO BY NAOKI FUKUDA

DRIVEN TO SUCCEED
Conte gives Donaire a ride in his Bentley

PHOTO BY FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY

"I have designed a program to strengthen Nonito's body to be better in the ring," said Korchemny. "I teach his muscles how to perform in extreme situations by improving agility in changing directions."

He believes that in some ways boxing is analogous to tennis. Like the tennis player, the boxer needs speed and power in moving back and forth.

The final team member is Dr. Cameron Fort, a chiropractor with extensive experience in working with successful professional triathletes, baseball, and hockey players. He utilizes a proven technique called Active Release Techniques (ART) on Donaire. ART is a soft tissue system that treats muscles, tendons, ligaments, fascia, and nerves.

"This is not a chiropractic technique," said Fort. "It is always a challenge to restore blood flow to a muscle. ART helps athletes train better. It is an advanced way to help someone heal."

Dr. Fort uses his hands to determine the specific tissues that are restricted and physically works them back to their normal texture, tension, and length by using hand positions and soft tissue manipulation methods.

"Nonito could only throw a few punches, and he would have tenderness," said Fort. "We worked on his shoulder muscles, and, within three weeks, he was sparring without pain."

"When I am hurt or sore, Cameron gets me in balance," says Donaire.

"I want him to understand why he uses specific therapies," added Conte. "Sparring will break you; you need to do things that enhance your performance and eat foods that fuel you for your job."

Donaire's team provides a mental advantage and increases his confidence. He believes that being mentally prepared helps one to be physically prepared, and then everything else falls into place. "Having confidence in your ability is the height of mental preparation—it surpasses everything."

Following his phenomenal second-round knockout win over Montiel last month, Donaire will take advantage of some well-deserved time off before resuming preparation for his next fight—hopefully in May.

"I have been training for six months straight," said Donaire. "I will continue light running and shadow boxing. I don't want to wear myself out. I feel tremendous."

THE RING asked Donaire what recommendations he has for other fighters that may never have the advantages his team provides.

"I would advise fighters to rest and to listen to your body," he said. "I have always learned that there is no better teacher than yourself. Be open to the teachings of others. Throughout my entire career, I have always researched things on my own, and then learn from other people." ■

HITTING ON THE BREAK

by Jim Bagg

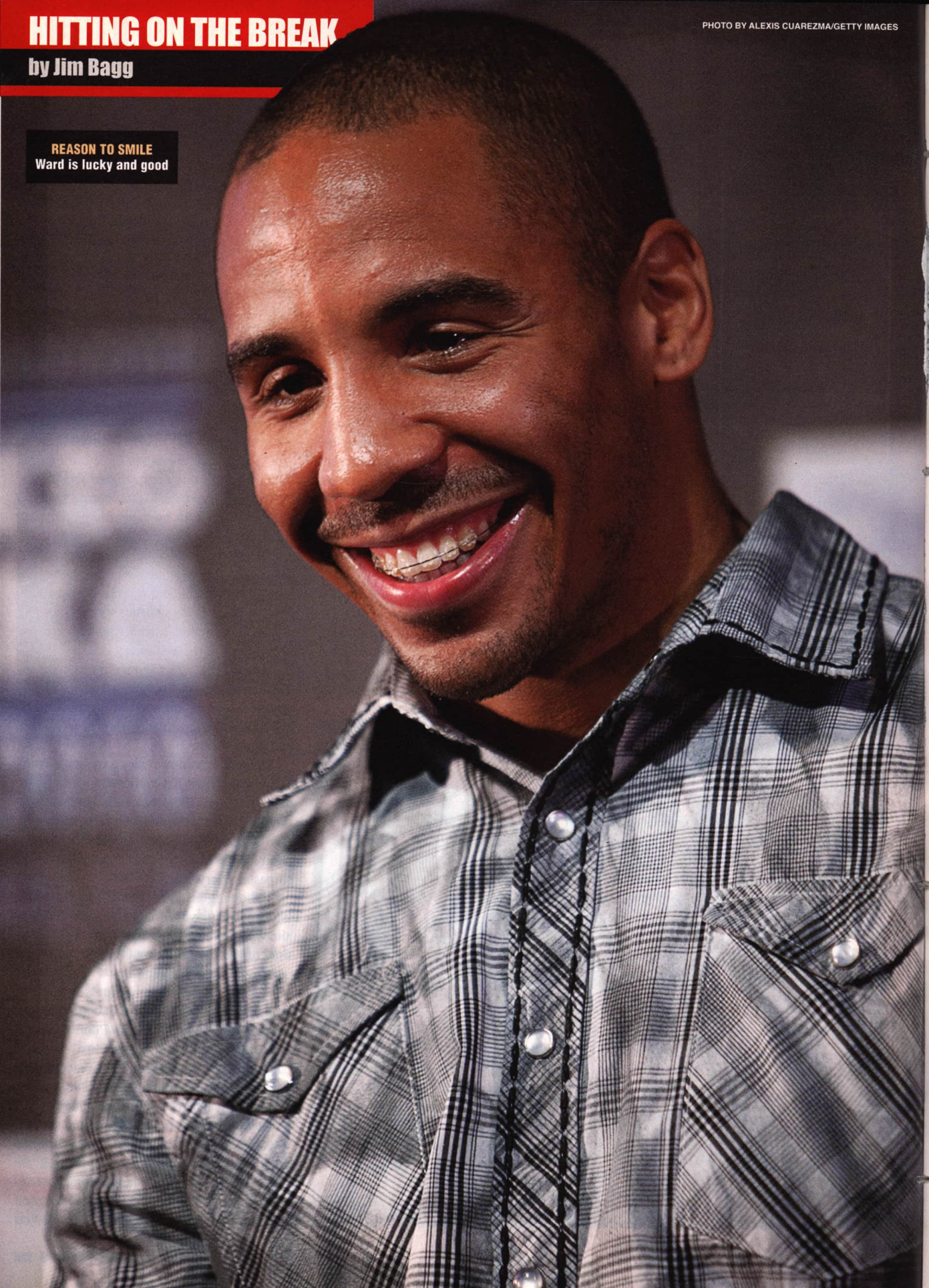


PHOTO BY ALEXIS CUAREZMA/GETTY IMAGES

REASON TO SMILE
Ward is lucky and good

Lucky Striker

PHOTO BY ALEXIS CUAREZMA/GETTY IMAGES

GUT CHECK
Was Kessler damaged goods?

Here's a dream matchup that the Baggarooney would pay (someone else's) good money to see: Dirty Harry vs. Andre Ward. You'd have ol' Clint Eastwood with the barrel of his gun fixed on Andre's head, asking, "Do you feel lucky, punk? Well, do ya?" And you'd have Ward answering him, "I call myself 'Son Of God.' What do you think?" The Baggomatic isn't quite sure how Harry would respond to that. Eventually, the Dirtymeister would have to shrug his shoulders, accept that the guy *does* feel lucky, and walk away (then get his butt in the gym to train Hilary Swank so she can get her neck snapped over a stool by Lucia Rijker).

It's the hidden subplot of Showtime's "Super Six" tournament, and the Baggalaureate is here to reveal it: Andre Ward, that S.O.G., is one lucky S.O.B. His tournament couldn't be more charmed if he was a leprechaun chowing down on marshmallowy breakfast cereal. As the semifinals loom, Ward is the number-one seed and everybody's pick to win. But what nobody seems to realize is that Ward has been loading his gloves—with a horseshoe.

First, he got lucky when he drew Mikkel Kessler in the opening round. It was a perfect situation for Ward, as Kessler was a fighter on the slide but nobody knew it yet. What we saw at the time was Ward beating the pre-tournament favorite and, thus, becoming the tournament favorite. But it's now clear to see that Kessler hasn't been the same since Joe Calzaghe deflated him like Freddy Krueger's blow-up doll. Physically, he's aged and mentally he hasn't quite bounced back from losing the zero on his record. Hey, it was a good win for Ward, no doubt about that. But it was fortuitous timing in getting to Kessler before anybody else could that allowed Ward, the self-proclaimed product of the Lord's loins, to get more credit for the win than he really deserved.

After that, Ward got lucky when he had the privilege of fighting Super Six sub (as in "substandard") Allan Green, who deserved to be in this tournament like Kevin Federline deserves to be famous. Talk about a freebie. And despite the easy pickins, Ward couldn't knock Green out the way Glen Johnson did a few months later.

For his third-round tournament match, the freebie got freebie-er, as Ward was gifted with two points without even needing to fight. That's because his old Olympic buddy Andre Dirrell got a mysterious headache, diagnosed by a nameless doctor, and Dirrell would be happy to tell you more but he can't talk about it without a lawyer, a notary public, a bodyguard, seven wise men, and one of the Pep Boys present.

So Ward fought Sakio Bika instead in a non-tournament fight, and there's nothing particularly lucky about sharing a ring with Bika, but the location of the fight was worth noting for luck-assessing purposes: the Oracle Arena in Oakland, California, Ward's hometown. Hmm. That's exactly where the Kessler and Green fights took place, come to think of it. Nobody else in the Super Six got more than one hometown fight, but somehow Ward has been granted three (well, two and an outside-the-tournament fight, but let's not nitpick). And if you don't think it gives you an advantage to fight in your hometown, ask judge Marty Sammon how in the hell he came up with a score of 120-108 in Ward's favor for the Bika fight. The other two judges had it 118-110, and even those scores smelled a tad unfair to Bika.

So that brings us to the present, but it isn't the end of Ward getting luckier than Ricky Martin stumbling into the Blue Oyster bar on Leather Chaps Night. In the semifinals, Ward gets Arthur Abraham at his all-time low point, demoralized after back-to-back losses to Dirrell and Carl Froch. Sure, Abraham was always a one-dimensional fighter, but, when that one dimension was supported by confidence, he was dangerous. Now he's bringing a butter knife to an Uzi fight. It's one more freebie for Ward, who will coast into the tournament finals. (Oh, and did we mention that even though Ward has to leave the cozy confines of Oakland, he's still fighting in his home state of California against a foreigner?)

And if all that wasn't enough, nobody's going to be coasting in the other semifinal, which pits Froch against Glen Johnson. That has the makings of a war, and whoever prevails will probably have something taken out of him along the way. Wouldn't you know it, more good luck for Ward! He'll enter the finals fresh after a glorified sparring session with Abraham while his opponent will be worn out like the Baggerific's favorite (and only) pair of underwear.

Yep, Andre Ward has gotten every imaginable break in this tournament. He's the luckiest fighter in the Super Six, and it ain't close.

Oh, and it's probably worth mentioning in passing that he's also the best fighter in the Super Six. But who wants to read about something as obvious as that?

Lord Of The Ring, Lord Of The Dance

Of all the horrible TV shows that have scored huge ratings in recent years, the most inexplicable success story has to be *Dancing With The Stars*. Sure, *Jersey Shore* is trash, but the world seems to be laughing *at* those spray-tanned 'roid heads, not *with* them. *American Idol* is a train wreck, but who doesn't rubberneck at a train wreck? Plus, there will always be an audience for music and the pursuit of stardom. And *Two And A Half Men* is trite and simple, but so is the majority of Middle America. These shows are all terrible, but their success at least makes some degree of sense to the Baggman.

DWTS, however, is in a category of its own. The celebrities are mostly D-listers or washed-up former C-listers. Nobody on the show is a young prodigy with a future in dance to get viewers emotionally invested in their journey. There's nothing funny happening, either to laugh with or laugh at. It's just an annoying host, some grating judges, and a bunch of lame dance numbers. With 785 channels to choose from, how does anybody land on this?

And not only do viewers keep landing on it, but boxers do also. First there was Evander Holyfield. Then Laila Ali. Then Floyd Mayweather. And now Sugar Ray Leonard is going to trade in his hooks and crosses for helas and croisees. (And, no, Edward Baggerhands didn't know either of those terms without looking them up, thank you very much.)

As a boxing fan, frankly, it's embarrassing. Sugar Ray, you're better than this. Your castmates include the overweight (Kirstie Alley), the over-the-hill (Ralph Macchio), and the utterly anonymous ("Psycho" Mike Catherwood, who opens up the possibility that the Baggapotamus is famous enough for this show). Yeah, you're an aging former star yourself, but do you really need to sink to this level?

Then again, if the next best option is another boxing comeback … uh, go get 'em on the dance floor, Ray! (Just don't expect the Baggapalooza to be watching.)

DANCE FEVER Sugar Ray and *Dancing With The Stars* partner Anna Trebunskaya

PHOTO BY BOB D'AMICO/ABC/GETTY IMAGES

THE MONTHLY MAILBAGG

The Mailbagg was apparently on FloMax this month, as the emails rushed in at a torrential pace. Here are three worth addressing before the toilet gets flushed:

Dear Mr. Bagg,

As a UK fan, the hype surrounding Dr. Steelhammer vs. Haye has already begun to build. I would like to ask your opinion on the fight: Who will win and why? And can David Haye truly be accepted by American fight fans if he wins? Keep up the Baggtastic work!

Kindest regards,
Michael Embra
Aged 17
Liverpool, England

Embryonic Embra,

You're the first mailbagger to include your age, and you're also the world's youngest boxing fan, since, according to the "boxing is dead" blowhards, everyone else who watches the sport resides in an assisted-living community. Why aren't you watching MMA and covering yourself from head to toe in tattoos like all the other kids your age?

To answer your questions, sorry, but there's no way any responsible fight observer can pick David Haye to beat Wlad Klitschko. That'd be like picking oceanfront property in Japan to defeat the tsunami. However, if somehow Haye did win, you'd better believe American fans would accept him. In fact, they'd probably try to adopt him. You defeat a Klitschko, you save the heavyweight division. If Haye beats Wlad, he could stroll around Times Square wearing a T-shirt with a picture of a beheaded Betty White, and America would still love him.

Hi Jim,

I read your stuff in THE RING Year-End Awards issue, and it was really good! Hopefully, things will improve in 2011. I mean, guys like Sulaiman, King, Arum, and Mendoza won't live forever, will they?

Do you think that boxing referees should have the option of the "video replay" like in other pro sports? If yes, would it improve the quality of their work?

Martin Beauchemin

Marty,

Sulaiman, King, Arum, and Mendoza won't live forever. But with the Baggscratcher's luck, they'll all outlive him by one day, just so he doesn't get the pleasure of breathing untainted air for even a fleeting moment.

Although the Baggasaurus is decidedly old school, even he feels the time has come for instant replay in boxing. If it slows down a fight by a few seconds, so be it. It's worth it to clarify whether a cut came from a punch or a butt and whether a knockdown was really a knockdown. However, instant replay will do nothing to improve the two biggest problems with lousy refs: It won't prevent them from unnecessarily breaking partial clinches and non-clinches, and it won't prevent them from stopping fights too soon or too late.

Oh, and it won't stop them from throwing white towels back out of the ring and forcing guys with bum knees to take beatings. The egomaniacs can't see their own ginormous egos—even on a replay.

Dear Mr. Bagg,

Your comments to Jose Hernandez were beyond the pale of common decency. Although I will remain a subscriber to RING, I will never again read your column. Too bad, in many ways, for me, because you are an excellent boxing commentator.

Regretfully,
Nelson Dawson

Nelson,

Yours was one of the many emails the Bagg Dipper received on this topic, ripping him for being so insensitive as to suggest to a soldier that the war he just came home from was a bad idea. So let's try this again: Thank you, Jose Hernandez, for serving your country. You are probably a good man. We're all glad you returned home in one piece.

Now that that's out of the way, Nelson, did you know that in two years, we'll be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the famous "mission accomplished" speech? If you're as much a man of your word as former Prez Bush, you've probably already lifted your boycott of the Baggster's column.

OLYMPIAN STINGER
Rios Ready For Action

PHOTO BY CRAIG BENNETT/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

AND THE STINGRAY GOES TO ...

Joseph Rios, a San Antonio junior bantamweight who followed one of the most basic Stingray blueprints: spoil an Olympian's perfect record. You do that, and you're automatically in Stingray contention. Rios only held Luis Yanez to a draw, but, when you do that in the other guy's hometown, especially when that other guy has already beaten you once, it's as good as a win.

2008 US Olympian Yanez was 4-0 coming in; whereas, Rios was just 8-5-1, and, with Yanez having won a unanimous decision over Rios in June '09, there was no question how this fight was supposed to go. But Rios had other ideas, and two of the judges were paying some attention to them, as Brock Groom scored it 58-56 for Rios and Erwin Sparks had it a reasonable 57-57. Arturo Velasquez' 59-55 for Yanez made about as much sense as Ferdie Pacheco talking with his mouth full of garbanzo beans.

Thankfully, judge Velasquez doesn't decide who wins Stingrays, and neither does that batty old buffoon Ferdie. The Baggnanarama owns that territory. And now Joseph Rios owns a Stingray award. ■

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Kelly's Comeback

Throughout the decades, addiction has been as constant in boxing as greedy promoters, crooked governing bodies, lack of federal oversight, and absence of union representation. There's an impossibly lengthy list of fighters who have struggled with drug and alcohol addiction, often unsuccessfully, during and after their careers.

There are very few who have overcome it mid-career and bounced back in time to have success in the ring, so the odds are against **Kelly Pavlik**.

The former middleweight champ, who left the Betty Ford Clinic in early January after a two-month stint in rehab for alcohol addiction, launches his comeback May 7 on the **Manny Pacquiao-Shane Mosley** undercard. The plan is for Pavlik to campaign at 168 pounds, where there is no shortage of name opponents for "The Ghost" to target.

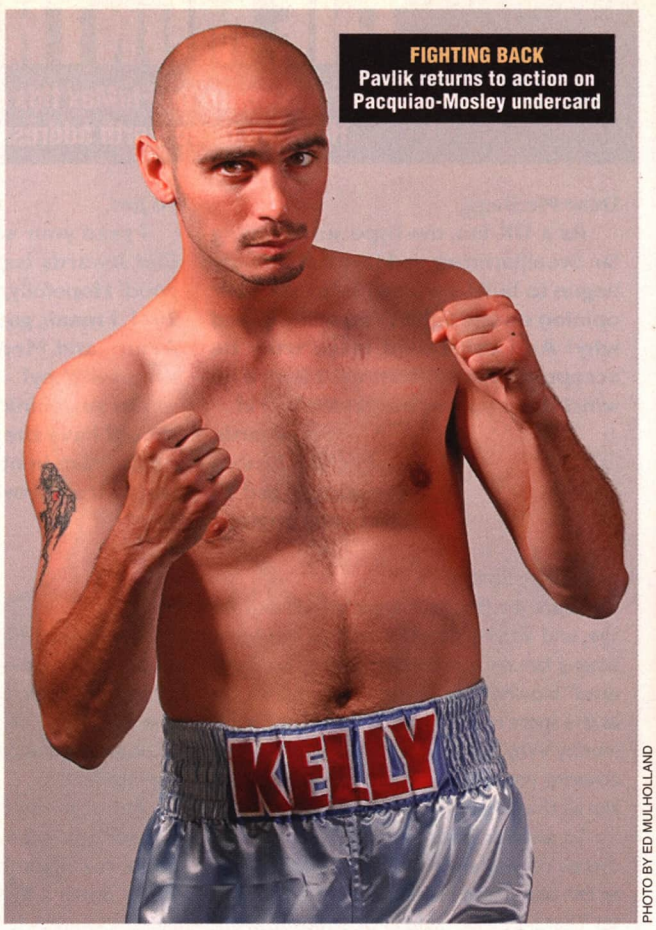
Like addiction recovery, Pavlik's comeback will be a one-step-at-a-time approach. His opponent May 7 will be super middleweight **Alfonso Lopez**, 21-0 (16), an unbeaten Texan with a pretty record built mostly on out-of-work rodeo clowns and armadillo hunters. The bout at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada, will mark just the fourth time Gomez has ventured outside of the Lone Star State for a fight.

Though history is stacked against a successful comeback for Pavlik, he seems to be better positioned than many who have come before him. To his credit, Pavlik decided to face his demons at a relatively young age. He turned 29 on April 4 and is still a baby in comparison to many of the current veterans who are still relevant well into their late 30s and early 40s.

"I'm very strong-willed," he told BoxingScene.com in March. "Even with the rehab thing, I could have easily said, 'No, I'm not going to do it.' But I didn't do that. I realize that some things just have to be done."

Even as his out-of-the-ring struggles worsened, Pavlik was still competing at a high level, albeit not quite as well as at his 2007-'08 peak. In his last bout, he lost the middleweight title to **Sergio Martinez** via 12-round decision in April 2010. Behind early, Pavlik rallied to even the scores through eight rounds. He dropped the last four while struggling to see through blood in his eyes, the result of worsening cuts. (Martinez has since proved that he might be pretty good.)

Pavlik isn't likely to see 160 pounds again, but there are plenty of potentially big fights lurking in a hot 168-pound class. "I do want to get back, just like how I fought in the middle rounds with Martinez and **[Jermain] Taylor**, all those fights," Pavlik told WYTV in his native Youngstown, Ohio. "I want to get back to the movement and being able to counter punch. I know my talent and what I've accomplished. There can be a lot more out there for me to get, and the goals are being set high again for myself."



FIGHTING BACK
Pavlik returns to action on Pacquiao-Mosley undercard

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Pavlik emerged as a Rust Belt hero at a time when the economy in those states was sinking from bad to really bad. He could still represent that glimmer of hope. Actually, Pavlik's publicized personal trials offer him a chance to connect with his fans on a deeper level than before. There's a reason why flawed fighters seem to draw more fans. Their shortcomings make them seem more like us. Their struggles become a metaphor for our struggles, their fights symbolic of our fights.

But even if he never returns to the top level of the sport, Pavlik can still be successful in his comeback. According to Caron Treatment Centers, the relapse rate for addictive diseases is between 50 and 90 percent. Addiction has ultimately proved to be an unbeatable opponent for far too many people, including fighters and former fighters. So, going forward, the most important fight for Pavlik won't be one that's waged in the ring. ■

LISTEN UP

In addition to Pavlik-Lopez, the Pacquiao-Mosley undercard will include two other intriguing matchups. Lightweight beltholder **Humberto Soto** meets **Urbano Antillon** in a rematch of their Fight of the Year candidate last December, and unbeaten junior featherweight **Wilfredo Vazquez Jr.** defends his belt against veteran **Jorge Arce** … Japanese star **Koki Kameda** will make the first defense of the bantamweight belt he won in December when he faces Nicaragua's **Daniel Diaz**, 18-2 (13), May 7 in Osaka, Japan … On the **Jean Pascal-Bernard Hopkins II** undercard, May 21 in Montreal, third-ranked light heavyweight **Chad Dawson** faces sixth-rated **Adrian Diaconu**. Dawson is expected to fight the Pascal-Hopkins winner if he gets past Diaconu.

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